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The Natural History of Religious Feeling

A Question of Miracles in the Soul

An Inductive Study by

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Author of "The Relation of Religion to Civil Government in the United States of America—A State without a Church but not without a Religion"

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NOTE

The author, who was in his eighty-third year, quietly passed away, probably during sleep, some time in the night of March 15, 1911, while this book was in press. He had been in the best of health; and, in spite of rapidly failing sight, had worked up to the last evening on the correction of the earlier proof-sheets. The task of correcting the final proof, as well as that of completing the Index and the Table of Contents, had to be performed, without his help, by others who were less competent.

PREFACE

THE author has been led into the present investigation by the difficulty he has encountered in his efforts to bring certain generally accepted notions regarding experimental religion into harmony with the great body of truth. He has no expectation of building for himself a complete system of philosophy; for, in his opinion, men will never be able to build, on earth, a tower reaching up to heaven: yet he thinks that they should be ever laboring to carry the building upward. He believes that their work, at any particular time, should be the shaping of the stones so that they shall be exactly fitted together, and the laying of them so that they shall make a continuation of the solid structure beneath. Each stage in the progress of knowledge has its unsettled questions, which the thinking men of the day are to settle, one by one. "Not all questions are for all times."

Some of the unsettled questions of the present time relate to that body, vaguely conceived and variously defined, as the church; its nature, the qualifications necessary for membership therein,

and the work it has to do in the world. Christians are very far from agreement on any of these questions. The proper relation of the church to the state has been a burning political question in Great Britain for many years, taxing the powers of her greatest statesmen; and now, the part which the church is to take in the education of the people, in that country, is a subject of controversy. The same questions are also agitating the public mind in France. In this country, where the church and the state are separate, the present relation of the state, not to the church, but to the Christian religion, is, to many persons, a subject of vital importance. Remembering the words of their Lord: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (*Matt.* xxi., 30), they are often distressed as they see the State endeavoring to maintain a neutrality towards the Christian religion which has the practical effect of hostility. Some of these questions the author has discussed in another work. He proposes now to discuss some of the unsettled questions in the church itself, such as its relation to the non-communicant world: who are to be admitted to membership, and on what terms? To these questions the various Christian denominations give widely differing answers. In the early days of the church its members were called disciples, which means simply pupils or learners; of late years, the word is seldom used,

and the title Christians has taken its place, a title that was never given to the disciples by their Lord nor by any inspired authority; given only by their enemies, and as a term of reproach. This change of title, insignificant as it may seem, was followed by very important consequences; nothing less than a change in the terms of membership in the church. The determining question now is: Are you a Christian? not, Are you a disciple? and it is held that the spiritual condition necessary for an affirmative answer to the first question is far different from that which is necessary for an affirmative answer to the second. In the beginning an act of the will, in obedience to the Master's command, "Follow me," with the faith and the feeling which were involved in the act, was a sufficient qualification for discipleship. Now, however, that part of the church which is called evangelical, holds that conversion is necessary to make a man a Christian and that conversion is a supernatural, divine work, a miracle in the soul, which is always manifested in the consciousness by unmistakable emotional experiences.

The author cannot but think that this assumption involves a strange oversight of the fact that not one of those whom Christ called to be his disciples had undergone any such experience; and the fact that Peter, the only disciple whose conversion is recorded, was converted long after he had been an accepted and even a favored disciple.

The deductions made from this assumption are of the gravest import. It is alleged, or implied, that those who have had the experience of conversion are the chosen of God, that they are so changed in nature as to have become new creatures, are the children of God, and are destined to an eternity of blessedness; while those who have not had the experience are the rejected of God, are children of Satan, and are destined to an eternity of woe. Consequences so momentous would naturally give pause to a person of proper sensibility, before adopting the premises from which they are drawn.

The author would say for himself that he has found it difficult to reconcile the facts, observed in the lives of those who profess to have had the experience of conversion, with the assumption that underlies the profession. He has, therefore, been compelled to subject the assumption itself to a critical examination; and to review the whole question of the supernatural or miraculous divine agency in religious experience. He has to confess that this investigation was undertaken to lay spectres of doubt which were beginning to appear in his own mind. He is somewhat familiar with the objections which have been brought against our religion from the domain of science, philosophy, and criticism; and he trusts that he has been able to concede to them all the weight they can justly claim; yet he has to say that, if the balance in his

mind has ever been disturbed by those objections, preponderating considerations soon caused it to settle on the affirmative side of the question; but, that the difficulties he has encountered in the domain of experimental religion have been much more seriously disturbing.

He has to confess also that, in coming to the conclusion that the alleged miraculous experiences are the products of natural causes, he has had to make no small sacrifice of preconceived notions—notions which have been derived, not more from the religious opinions prevailing around him, than from his own experience—a never to be forgotten experience, in which he supposed that his own spiritual life began.

The author thinks that the time has come for an advance to be made, in the religious world, like that which began, in the scientific world, with the appearance of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species;* an advance, from an incorrect, to a more nearly correct, view of the divine order in the development of the spiritual life in man.

He trusts that the work he has undertaken in his own behalf may serve to relieve in some measure the perplexities of others who have been likewise troubled; and may, at the same time, widen the scope of the church so that she shall not be guilty of rejecting any of those whom Christ has received; denying them the benefits of her ordinances, her fellowship, and her culture.

If the views he has presented should happen to be proved erroneous, he would console himself with the assurance that a full and sincere presentation of an error, by provoking correction, is one of the most effective means of extending the knowledge of the truth.

I. A. C.

Washington, Ill., 1911.

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Part I

The Natural Causes of Religious Feeling

CHAPTER I

Tropism

WE shall not attempt to frame any definition of religion, as a preliminary to the investigation upon which we are now entering; nor shall we make any search among the definitions which have already been given, with a view of finding one that shall be acceptable to ourselves. We shall start our investigation from the obvious fact that feeling is the efficient antecedent of all religious action, whether it be of both body and mind in the practice of magic, in superstitious observance, in worship; or of the mind alone in the construction of the various systems of mythology and theology. In beginning our investigation with the study of this feeling, it will be pertinent, if not necessary, to make a study of feeling in general. That study should begin, of course, with the simplest and least complicated manifestations of feeling—with those which are found only in the lowest forms of animal life.

Feeling, in these creatures, is manifested principally, if not only, in their turning towards, or

away from, certain things. This turning has been called tropism, from a Greek word which means to turn; and the turning has been given various special names, in accordance with the object to which or from which, the turning is made, such as heliotropism, geotropism, etc. The turning towards an object is called a positive tropism, and the turning away, a negative tropism. A familiar example of positive heliotropism is to be seen in the plants in a window which, however they may be set, will soon be found turning towards the light. Both positive and negative heliotropism may be seen in the germination of the seed. If a seed be placed on moist ground, that part of the germ which is to be the stem will, when it begins to grow, turn upward toward the light, and that part, which is to be the root, will turn downward away from the light.

The turning of the plants in the window towards the light has been explained by the supposition that the light promotes the storing of carbon on the side of the stem next to the window, which hardens it so that it cannot expand; while the other side, being softer, expands. This explanation, however, will not account for all the movements of plants, not even for all that are heliotropic. It will not account for the action of the crocus, which opens its flower in the morning and closes it in the evening; nor for that of the evening primrose, which opens its flower in the evening

and closes it in the morning; nor for that of the honey locust, which closes its leaflets in the evening and opens them in the morning; nor for that of the acacia, the leaflets of which close at sunset and open at sunrise, while its flowers open at sunset and close at sunrise. This supposition fails entirely to explain the action of the sensitive plant which folds its leaflets at a touch; or the action of the tendrils of the vine, sweeping round in a circle and instantly twining round a twig at a touch; or the action of the ivy, turning to the wall; and the action of the cilia of the spores of algæ, by which they swim as though they had the power of voluntary motion. Botanists are agreed that the movements of plants cannot all be explained by the action of mechanical forces. The only explanation possible is that the Creator has lodged in them a dormant irritability, which is roused by a stimulus received from certain external objects and influences. We can hardly fail to notice two things in these movements: (1) How strikingly this roused irritability in plants is like to feeling in the animal creation[1]; (2) that the turning secures some good for the plant which could not otherwise be obtained.

[1] Mr. Francis Darwin in the inaugural address of the President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at Dublin on September 2, 1908, maintained that plants may acquire habits which are transmissible; that their actions in certain cases are determined by the effect on the organism of previous actions; and adduces in support of his supposition the

In this investigation we are more directly concerned with tropisms in the animal kingdom; for they are, without question, prompted by feeling.[1]

Heliotropism. A Hydroid eudendrium, placed near a window, was found to bend towards the window like a positively *heliotropic* plant. Moths at night turn towards the flame of a lamp or the blaze of a fire. Planaria torva, placed at night in a dish, the half of which was covered with black paper, were all found under the covered part of the dish in the morning. Certain little creatures of the sea, negatively heliotropic, descend to the depths during the day and come to the surface at night.

Geotropism. If certain Actinians, a Cerianthus, for example be laid horizontally on a wire netting the meshes of which are so fine that the body of the creature can be drawn through only by force, and the netting be placed on the top of a cup in an aquarium, the body of the animal will soon be found forced through one of the meshes so that it

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fact that plants which have been accustomed to sleep at night retain the habit when kept continuously in the dark. He goes so far as to say that in "all living things there is something psychic"; that in plants "there is a faint copy of what we know as consciousness in ourselves."

[1] Prof. Jacques Loeb, M.D., has made a laboratory study of tropism in the lower animals, and we shall take our examples of animal tropisms from his work entitled *Comparative Physiology of the Brain and Comparative Psychology.*

hangs in a vertical position. If the netting be then turned upside down, the lower part of the body will turn and force itself down through another mesh; and if the netting be turned again, the creature will be found woven in and out of three meshes in its effort to gain a position in line with the force of gravitation. Other animals have a negative geotropism. If a Cucumaria be placed on the lower edge of a glass plate which is in a vertical position, it will crawl to the upper edge of the plate; and if the plate be revolved on an axis, so that its position is reversed, the animal will crawl to the edge which is then the uppermost.

Galvanotropism. If a constant galvanic current be passed through a trough in which are larvæ of Amblystoma so that it shall pass from the head to the tail, the body will bend upward; and if the current be reversed, the body will be bent downward. If the current be passed from the head to the tail, the hind legs will be braced backwards, making the forward movement easier; and if the current be reversed, the hind legs will be braced forward making the backward movement easier. Crayfish and shrimps are affected in the same way by the galvanic current.

Chemotropism. If one side of the bottom of a box be covered with white blotting paper and the other side with the compost of stables, and certain worms, that live in compost, be placed on the blotting paper, they will all be found in a little

while gathered in the compost. If a piece of fat meat and a piece of lean, both fresh from the same animal, be placed side by side where there are flies, it will be found that the eggs of the flies are all laid on the lean meat. Both the fly and its larva are chemotropical to certain chemical influences that are in the lean meat and are not in the fat.

Stereotropism. There is a tendency in certain animals to have a part, or the whole of their exterior, touched by some hard body. It is this which causes the earthworm to make its way into the ground; and causes certain insects to seek the cracks in material objects. If a number of Nereis and an equal number of glass tubes, about the size of their bodies, be placed in a dish of sea water, it will be found after a while that there is a Nereis in each tube; and they will remain there even if the tubes be exposed to the direct rays of the sun, which would cause their death.

In all of these cases, this is to be observed: That it is feeling, and not intelligence that determines the movement. Some of the creatures can hardly be said to have any intelligence, being destitute of the organs of intelligence; but Prof. Loeb has put the fact beyond question by experiment. Sixty specimens of Planaria, which have not only a brain but comparatively well-developed eyes, were cut transversely just behind the brain and the eyes, and in the evening were put in a dish

with vertical sides, half of the dish being covered with black paper. In the morning nearly all the pieces were found under the covered side of the dish. A few of both parts were huddled together in a corner of the other side where the light was a comparative minimum. The only difference between the two parts was that the anterior part reacted to the light in one minute while the posterior part required about five minutes for the reaction. The same experiment with earthworms and the worms that live in the compost of stables was followed with the same results.[1]

1. It appears, therefore, that action prompted by feeling, without intelligence, is the distinctive characteristic of all tropism. 2. It should be noticed in these cases that the function or office

[1] Prof. Loeb goes so far as to affirm that tropism is, in all cases, the result of mechanical forces. He says: "If a moth be struck by the light on one side, those muscles which turn the head towards the light become more active than those of the opposite side, and correspondingly the head of the animal is turned toward the source of light. As soon as the head of the animal has this orientation and the median plane (or plane of symmetry) comes into the direction of the rays of light, the symmetrical points of the surface of the body are struck by the rays of light at the same angle. . . . Thus it is led to the source of the light. . . . Hence the 'instinct' that drives animals into the light is nothing more than the chemical—and indirectly the mechanical—effect of light. The moth does not fly into the flame out of 'curiosity,' neither is it 'attracted' by the light. This, notwithstanding that the hypothesis fails to explain the circling of the moth around a light which is enclosed in a translucent globe."—*Comparative Physiology of the Brain and Comparative Psychology*, 181, 182.

of tropism is the promotion of the welfare and the conservation of the life of the creature; the only exception being the moth, which is impelled by its heliotropism to fly into the flame; but this may serve a good purpose in the general animal economy, the prevention of an undue multiplication of these insects, as the multiplication of others is prevented by birds, bats, and parasites. 3. It is to be noticed that the feeling before the movement is the opposite of the feeling which comes after the movement; in the one case, discomfort or pain; in the other, comfort or pleasure.

It is reasonable to suppose that tropism will be less conspicuous in animals which are endowed with intelligence than in others; but well-marked tropisms are still to be found among the higher animals. Gregarious animals have a positive tropism toward the members of their own flock; the dog has a negative tropism toward his own kind and a positive tropism toward mankind. In view of the unity of the animal creation, of which man is a member, it will be reasonable to suppose that he is not entirely destitute of tropisms. That he has certain turnings which are produced by a primitive and blind impulse, is obvious, notwithstanding that most of them are complicated with motives derived from his intelligence. A positive heliotropism appears in the turning of the eye of the infant toward the light, and a negative heliotropism appears in all men when they desire

to sleep. A geotropism appears in the dizziness a man feels when on a high pinnacle, and in the shudder he feels at the thought of being without any solid footing at an elevation like that of the clouds. The distress he feels when alone and the satisfaction when another is near spring from a tropism. It is an anthropotropism that makes man a social being. The turning of one sex toward the other is a tropism, a primitive action, and independent of the intelligence. The sight of the *muliebria* by the male will cause a turning toward the female that is antecedent to any exercise of intelligence; and, in some cases, may be so strong as to overcome the will, even when it is set in opposition by the clearest intelligence. The clothing of civilized peoples is evidence of a human tropism. The turning of the mother toward her new-born offspring and of the child toward the mother is a tropism. In all cases the pleasure has a constitutional, and not an intellectual basis. We can easily see that the last two tropisms fulfil an important office in the economy of life and that, on this account, the pleasure attending them is one of the strongest of which the human being is capable. The milder degree of pleasure, attending the turning of man toward his fellow man, is friendship; the more intense pleasure, attending the turning of one sex toward the other, and of the parent toward the child, and of the child toward the parent, is love. The proverbial

blindness of love must be taken as the mark of a tropism.

Theotropism. There is in mankind another turning which exhibits all the specific marks of a tropism. It is the turning toward certain powers and beings that are supposed to dwell in the unseen world and to hold this world as a chief province of their domain, exerting a beneficent or a baleful potency in the affairs of men.

This tropism is proved to be primordial by the fact that it is both universal and blind. If not universal, the exception will be found in the very lowest of the race. A while ago, it was alleged that a savage tribe had been found that was destitute of all religious ideas; but recent investigations have shown that the statement was incorrect, based on insufficient information and hasty conclusions. A definition of religion might easily be framed, under which a people could be found of whom it might be said that they were without a religion; but none could be found who were without a superstition; and superstition, as well as religion, springs from the inherent tendency to turn to God.

The origin of religion has been the subject of many learned disquisitions; but no theory on the subject has yet been propounded which has met with general acceptance. In one of the latest and most elaborate of these discussions, we find the following statement:

To the question as to when and how man became possessed of those faculties of thought and imagination, those impulses of feeling, and needs demanding a practical satisfaction, in which the psychological sources of religion lie, only a negative answer can be returned. We do not know when or how man began to be a religious being. When we find him first, we find him already religious.[1]

This turning of mankind toward the unseen world is also blind, not springing from any knowledge they have of the powers or beings dwelling therein; and not less blind in the higher than in the lower races. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (*Job.* xi., 7, 8)." "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him" (*Luke* x., 22). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (*John* i., 18). "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 *Tim.* vi., 16). In addition to these declarations of the Scriptures, we have the conclusion of philosophy that it is impossible for the

[1] *The Philosophy of Religion*, by George Trumbull Ladd, LL.D., i., 150

Infinite, remaining infinite, to be known by, or to be made known to, the finite mind.

If, however, this be a tropism, two conclusions must inevitably follow: the one speculative, the other practical.

1. The turning is, in this case, as in the others, evidence of the existence of that which causes it. The turning of the Cerianthus, were it capable of thought, would be evidence to it of the existence of the force of gravitation; the turning of the Hydroid eudendrium would be to it evidence of the existence of light; the movements of the larvæ of Amblystoma would be evidence to them of the existence of the galvanic current. These creatures are incapable of the thought that goes by induction, from the effect to the cause; and they cannot be said to have any knowledge of the cause of their tropism. Man, however, is capable of such thought, and his tropism is evidence to him of the existence of its cause; but it gives him knowledge only of the existence, not of the nature, character, plan, or work of that cause. It will be the task of his mind to acquire that knowledge; the work of his life to "seek the Lord, if haply he might feel after him and find him." The work of correcting all the errors that have crept into his supposed knowledge of God; to refine away all its crudeness, and carry it on to perfection, will be slow and laborious, requiring ages for its completion. It is probable, indeed it might reasonably

be expected, that God, in causing the tropism in man, the creature, who was made in his own image and after his own likeness, would impart to susceptible individuals some intimations of his scheme of human development; it might be expected, that the intimations would be fragmentary and obscure; and that the prophets themselves would have to search "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow."

2. The practical conclusion is, that what is true of all other tropisms must be true of this, namely, that it is for the conservation of the welfare and life of the creature in whom it has been placed. We have seen that the lower animals suffer if hindered from following their tropism and that they perish if the hindrance be continued; and it must be assumed that the hindrance of this tropism in man will be followed with like consequences; indeed, with more serious consequences, as this tropism, not being a turning to those things that minister to the appetites of the body, but to things that minister to the aspirations of the soul, belong to the finer and higher part of man's nature. A damage to the capstan of an ocean steamer might be regarded as a serious accident, but it would not be so serious as a damage to the chronometer or the compass. The one is a coarse

structure, and the other is a fine piece of mechanism; damage to the one might cause embarrassment; damage to the other might result in wreck. The individual who resists or suppresses this tropism will give his attention to the inferior interests of life; he will be inclined to the indulgence of his appetites and passions, and will be tending toward destruction. It will be better for mankind that this tropism should have free course, even when it leads into superstition and idolatry, than that it should be suppressed. A man who is truly humane would not deprive the heathen of their idolatry unless he could give them, in its stead, the knowledge of the living and true God.

In most of the tropisms in animate creatures the feeling which attends the turning is mild and uniform; but there are two tropisms in man in which the feeling may rise to the highest pitch of intensity—the turning of one sex to the other and the turning of man to God. In the one case the feeling may rise from a quiet deference to a passionate love; in the other it may rise from a mild reverence to an overpowering ecstasy. These experiences occur only in exceptional conditions, and in those conditions, serve a good purpose in the economy of life, as we shall see. But they are so impressive and so extraordinary that they are attributed to a divine agency. One says:

Yes, love indeed is light from heaven,
A spark of that immortal fire,
With angels shared; by Allah given,
To lift from earth our low desire.[1]

Another tells us that:

Marriages are made in heaven.[2]

These statements are generally regarded as mere fancies of the poet, but many believe that the exalted religious experiences are the product of immediate divine action upon the soul. All Christians believe that God, by his providence, rules in the outer world; that, in some inscrutable perhaps inconceivable way, he works his will, in and through nature, without breaking a single thread in the reticulation of her laws; but all the exalted religious experiences are held to be miraculous. It is admitted that in the outer world miracles have been of rare occurrence and that they have long ago ceased; but it is declared that, in the inner world, they are of daily occurrence, and that they constitute the specific character of a genuine religious experience. They who would enter the inner world for the purpose of testing this assumption, as the like assumptions are tested in the outer world, are regarded as profaning the holy of holies and will be met with the warning, "*Procul, O Procul, este profani.*"

[1] Byron, *The Giaour.* [2] Tennyson, *Aylmer's Field.*

But the exact ascertainment of truth, even in the holy of holies, cannot be a profanation; and, of all places in the world, that is the place in which the ascertainment of the truth is of the greatest importance.

We propose, therefore, to inquire into the reality of the miracles which are supposed to have been wrought in the human soul.

CHAPTER II

Regeneration the One Miracle in the Human Soul

THE alleged miracles of the inner world may be divided into two classes. The distinctive characteristic of the first class is that the working of them does not come within the cognizance of the person in whom they are wrought; that they are, wholly divine, not in any part the product of natural causes or of human agency; the person in whom they are wrought can neither co-operate in the work nor obstruct it. The alleged miracles of this class are:

1. **The Grace of Holy Orders.** It is supposed that persons holding holy orders are in possession of certain supernatural powers, which they are able to communicate to others by the laying on of hands. This grace is supposed to have come down, in unbroken succession, from the apostles who, by the laying on of their hands, communicated to others those miraculous powers called "spiritual gifts." This supposed supernatural power, when exercised, is not now, and probably

never has been, since the apostolic age, followed by ascertainable effects, and has been regarded as miraculous only by those who find satisfaction in the belief; and by them, without other ground in fact, than the satisfaction it affords.

2. Sacramental Grace. The church of Rome holds that the sacraments are made efficacious by a miraculous exercise of divine power in the person who receives them. The older Lutherans, in their doctrine of consubstantiation, and the Calvinists, in their doctrine of the spiritual presence, have held that there is a supernatural divine action within those who have true faith when receiving the sacraments. In none of these cases, however, have any unquestionable effects of the divine agency appeared, and the doctrine must, therefore, be left in the realm of unverifiable hypotheses. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the Zwinglian doctrine, which denies the reality of any such supernatural agency in the sacraments, has come to be the prevailing doctrine of the Protestant world.

3. Papal Infallibility. The Roman Catholic Church has proclaimed the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, when speaking *ex-cathedra;* in which doctrine one or the other of two different things may be affirmed. 1. That the Pope is really infallible, when speaking officially; rendered so by supernatural agency. 2. That he is to be regarded as infallible, when so speaking. In the

one case, he might reasonably be called upon to attest his claim of supernatural power by such signs and wonders as those by which Christ and his apostles attested their claims to the possession of such power; but no such signs and wonders have ever been wrought. In the other case, no real infallibility is claimed; it is simply asserted that the Pope is the supreme authority in the church, that from his decision there is no appeal, and that no one may question its correctness.

4. **The Ordeal.** In the ordeal by fire, water, and battle, matters in dispute and questions of guilt or innocence were supposed to be determined by supernatural divine action within the person undergoing the trial. The whole civilized world now denies the reality of any such divine action.

5. **Miraculous Healing.** That there have been cases of the healing of the king's evil by the touch of a king; of the healing of various diseases by the touch of holy relics, by the laying on of hands, by prayer, and by faith, can hardly be denied; but natural causes are now known, which are fully adequate to the explanation of all the facts; and the hypothesis of supernatural agency is, therefore, excluded.

6. **Spiritual Illumination.** In every religion there are two distinct elements: the one intellectual, a knowledge of truth; the other emotional, a state of feeling. Scarcely any one believes that

there has been, since the close of the Scripture canon, any direct action of God on the human mind, communicating new truth. The illumination of the mind and the opening of the understanding by the Spirit, are believed to be an action on the emotional nature, enabling men to see truth which has already been revealed. It is providential; by the direction, not by the interruption, of the operation of natural causes. The statement by the apostle Paul, in Rom. viii., 16, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," some of the most judicious commentators interpret as meaning that the Spirit, acting providentially within us, produces the fruits of the Spirit, which, coming under our observation, are evidences that we are the children of God; or that, acting in the same way, he produces filial feelings and affections which we infer can come from no other source. In either case, the operation of the Spirit is matter of inference, not of observation.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, in his work on the *Natural and the Supernatural*, and Dr. L. F. Stearns, in his work on the *Evidence of Christian Experience* both contend that there may be now what we would call a supernatural communication of truth to man. But there is not in existence any body of truth, so communicated, which men are under obligation to accept as a divine revelation. These communications are supposed to give to the per-

son himself nothing more than the knowledge of his own relation to God; and, therefore, are not supposed to have validity or authority for any other person. We conclude, therefore, that the facts in view are not sufficient to warrant the belief that the witness of the Spirit in Christian experience is miraculous.

7. Regeneration. We take it for granted that man is imperfect, that his imperfection is constitutional, that he is carnal, not spiritual, that his "carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," that he is in the state of death which belongs to the carnally-minded, and destitute of that life and peace which belong to the spiritually-minded.[1] In order, therefore, to attain unto perfection, he must be made a new creature, a work which can be accomplished only by the direct action of the Creator, working within him a regeneration; for "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit"; he "must be born again." That this regeneration is produced by immediate divine agency without the co-operation, or even the knowledge of the recipient, is put beyond question by the illustration our Lord used, namely birth; and

[1] How he came to be in this condition; whether it was by a fall from an estate of perfection, in which he was created; or by the failure of a divine idea to come into full realization, or by an obstructed and incompleted evolution; it is not pertinent to our investigation to inquire; but the fact is too patent and impressive to be denied.

by his words, "the wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[1] Like the breathing of the breath of life into the nostrils of the first man, it is a purely supernatural work,—a miracle, not dependent upon, or complicated with, any human agency or with the operation of any natural causes.[2]

The distinctive characteristics of the miracles of the second class, alleged to have been wrought in the soul, are: (1) that they are dependent on certain conditions which the person in whom

[1] "Regeneration is an act of God. It is not an act, which, by argument and persuasion, or by moral power, he induces the sinner to perform. . . Regeneration, which (subjectively considered) is a change wrought in us and not an act performed by us. Raising Lazarus from the dead was an act of omnipotence. Nothing intervened between the volition and the effect. The act of quickening was the act of God. In that matter Lazarus was passive. But in the acts of the restored vitality, he was active and free. It is in this sense that regeneration is the act of God's almighty power. Nothing intervenes between the volition that the soul, spiritually dead, should live, and the desired effect. But in all that belongs to the consciousness; all that precedes or follows the imparting of this life; the soul, is active and is influenced by the truth, acting according to the laws of our mental constitution."—*Systematic Theology*, by Charles Hodge, D.D., iii., 31–32.

[2] Regeneration in man is the bestowal of an increment to the life which the Creator has, from the beginning, imparted to his creatures. It is simply the continuation of that process of evolution by which life has advanced, from the simplest and lowest forms to the more complex and higher forms with which the earth now is filled.

they are wrought must provide; (2) that they are not solely the products of divine supernatural agency, but are, in part, the product of natural causes and of human agency; (3) that they always, and from the very beginning, come within the cognizance of the person in whom they are wrought, the presumption being that they have not taken place unless they are perceived and felt. There are but two alleged miracles of this class:

1. **The Religious Ecstasy, Rapture, or Transport.**
2. **Conversion.**

We recognize the fact that God has ordained nature to be the theatre, and to furnish the conditions, for the physical development of all living things, that nature is to be the theatre and to furnish the conditions for the mental and moral development of man; and that, for the accomplishment of both of these purposes, an order must be established in nature and maintained in uniformity. Yet we maintain that God, by whom "all things consist," is immanent in nature, "upholding all things by the word of his power," and that a miracle is always possible. Creation was a miracle, and the admission that God created the world takes away all rational ground from the dogma of the impossibility of miracles. To assume that the world came to its present condition by an evolution which had no pre-existent force to start the movement, is to suppose an

effect without a cause; a suspension of the law of inertia without an agency to make the suspension; a miracle without a person to work it. We maintain also that, in the execution of his scheme for the redemption of sinful man, a miraculous interposition of his power is not only possible but probable. The blind turning of man toward God needs illumination; the new life imparted by regeneration needs development; all the moral powers in the nature of man need strengthening; and all his pure affections need quickening. For this purpose God revealed himself miraculously, at first by prophets, finally, and most fully, by his Son, the greatest of the prophets. These miraculous manifestations were so far sufficient for the faith of mankind that now it is required that, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." These facts, taken together with the law of parsimony, which forbids the hypothesis of miracle, when natural causes are adequate to the production of the result, are ground for an antecedent presumption against the supposition of any further miraculous manifestations.

Without allowing any undue weight to this presumption, we shall now proceed to inquire into the reality of the two miracles which it is now alleged, are wrought in the human soul.

Part II

The Religious Ecstasy

CHAPTER I

The Ecstasy in the Heathen World

AS a first step in this part of our investigation we shall have to take account of the religious ecstasies in the heathen world for they have been quite as common, and have exhibited their peculiar phenomena quite as distinctly, in that world as in the Christian world. We shall need, therefore, to compare the heathen with the Christian experiences, in order to ascertain whether there are any differences great enough and specific enough to warrant the affirmation that the former have been produced by natural causes and the latter by a supernatural agent.

1. **The Yoga.** The Yoga, a division of the Sankya philosophy, which is probably the oldest system of Hindu philosophy, professed to be the means of attaining perfect present and eternal happiness. It prescribed eight steps to be taken in order to reach the beatific state: sitting firmly and without motion on a spot that is neither too high nor too low, forbearance, religious observance,

postures, restraint of the senses, steadying of the mind, contemplation, and profound meditation. One of the postures required consisted in placing the left foot on the right thigh, and the right foot on the left thigh; and holding, with the right hand, the right great toe, and with the left hand, the left great toe, the hands coming from behind the back, and crossing each other; while the chin rested on the interclavicular space, and the sight was fixed on the tip of the nose. The seventh step, contemplation, was the fixing of the mind on the one great object of knowledge, the Supreme Spirit, so as to exclude all other thoughts. The eighth step, profound meditation, was the perfect absorption of thought in the one object of meditation, the Supreme Spirit. Following these steps, the susceptible seldom failed to reach the most exalted religious experience, union with, and absorption in, the deity. Often narcotic or exhilarating substances were used to hasten the entrance into the beatific state: especially the juice of the soma, the moon plant. This was supposed to have given exhilaration to the gods themselves and was celebrated, in the Vedic hymns, as itself a god. One of the names of Indra was Somapa, soma-drinker. The worshipper who drank it was supposed to be divinely illuminated, made partaker of celestial joy, and of immortality.

In one of the Vedic hymns, the worshippers say,

We 've quaffed the soma bright,
And immortal grown,
We 've entered into light,
And all the gods have known;
What mortal now can harm?
Or foeman vex us more?
Through thee, beyond alarm,
Immortal God, we soar.

2. The Ancient Oracles. The ancient Greeks believed that there was a capacity in the human soul to be affected directly by the action of the gods; rudimentary in the majority of men, but largely developed in a favored few. Even some of the sober-minded philosophers believed themselves inspired. Socrates believed that he was subject to a divine leader whom he called his Demon. He said that, from his youth up, he had been cognizant of a voice, and that the power, from which this voice emanated, was the god, or the gods, the same gods who also speak by the oracles.

The oracles delivered their message in a state of ecstasy or trance, in which it was supposed that the god acted immediately on their souls. The Pythia, at Delphi, the most celebrated oracle, was always a woman, and generally one of the ignorant rural population. She prepared herself for the divine communication by fasting and abstraction of the mind. In the temple was an opening in the earth, from which issued an intoxi-

cating vapor. Over this opening a tripod was erected, upon which the Pythia was mounted. After inhaling the vapor for a time she fell into a trance, and delivered the message, which the god was supposed to have impressed on her soul by supernatural action.

There were sacred places, also, at which the applicant himself was expected to receive the divine communication. In these cases, he was required to go through a course of physical depletion by fasting, to lie on his back in the temple, and to fix his mind by contemplation, until sleep came, when his dream would be the communication of the god to his soul.

3. The Pythagoreans. There is reason to believe that Pythagoras (B.C. 570) regarded the natural energy of the mind as insufficient for the attainment of the highest knowledge of the truth; and with that the attainment of the highest happiness. He held that this knowledge could be attained only in exalted states of feeling, in which direct communications were made to the soul by the divine spirit. There is reason to believe that he not only sought these exalted experiences, but that he resorted to the natural means of producing them, and that he and his followers formed a religious, or a semi-religious, brotherhood.

4. The Worship of Dionysus. We need not attempt to trace the worship of the Grecian Dionysus (the Roman Bacchus) to its origin; or

to give the particulars in which the several festivals celebrated in his honor differed from one another. We shall give only the general meaning of his worship with some of the exercises with which it was performed.

Dionysus, according to the Grecian mythology, was the son of Semele and Zeus. He was the god of the fertilizing spring showers, and especially the god of the vine. He journeyed over the earth teaching men to cultivate the vine and to make wine. The festival in his honor, as the god of the vintage, was celebrated with an abandonment to mirth and hilarity, and with buffoonery, in which even the slaves were expected to join. After the vintage he was supposed to have been slain, and to lie dead under the winter frost. This supposition animated his worshippers with the gravest sentiments and led them to celebrate his worship even with bloody rites. The jolly and mirth-giving god becomes the terrible god who unseats the reason, and is now Zagreus.

Zagreus, the son of Persephone by Zeus, her father, was killed by the Titans, who, after tearing the body to pieces, devoured it, leaving only the heart, which was carried to Zeus, and by him given to Semele, of whom Zagreus was born again as Dionysus.

One form of the worship was restricted to women, who, in celebrating it, met in the winter among the hills, clad in fawn skins and with their

hair dishevelled, swung the thyrsus, the symbol of the wine-god, beat the cymbals, and danced till they worked themselves into the highest state of religious frenzy. The holiest rites took place at night by the light of torches, in which the frenzied women slew a bull, tore him in pieces with their teeth, and ate the raw flesh, as Zagreus had been torn and eaten by the Titans and then sought, in mourning, for the dead god. It was to these frantic excitements and violent demonstrations, upon which men were not allowed to intrude, the name "orgies" was first given.

5. Cybele. The mother of the gods had the Curetes, Corybantes, and Dactyls, as her priests and attendants, inferior deities or demons, who are said to have worshipped her with wild orgiastic dances and music, and who were themselves worshipped by men, in the same manner. The votaries of Cybele worshipped her with a sacred madness, during which the soul was surrendered to the control of the deity, and was endowed with a sense of power, and with preternatural strength.

6. Demeter. The Roman Ceres was the daughter of Kronos and his sister Rhea, who was the sister of Zeus. She was the goddess of the cornfield, who taught and induced men to cultivate grain. Her daughter Persephone, of whom her brother Zeus was the father, while gathering flowers in a meadow was carried off by Hades, the god of the underworld, to be his wife. The

mother, inconsolable at the loss, wandered for nine days and nights, with torches in her hand, searching for her daughter, till at length Helios revealed to her the rape, which had been instigated by Zeus. Inflamed with anger, she renounced Zeus and the society of Olympus. She wandered on the earth, grieving and fasting, until she came to Eleusis, where she was received by Keleos, the king, as the nurse for his new-born son Demophoon. Offended by the interference with her plan to give the youth exemption from old age and death, she caused her wan and aged look to disappear and standing in the majesty of her divine form, she diffused a dazzling brightness through the whole house, and said: "I am the exalted Demeter, the charm and comfort of both gods and men. Let the people of Eleusis erect, for me, a temple and an altar on yonder hill, above the fountain, and I will prescribe to them the orgies they must religiously observe, in order to propitiate my favor."

The temple was erected, and Demeter took up her abode therein, still pining with grief for the loss of her daughter. For a whole year she suffered not a grain that was sown to grow; and the whole human race would have perished, had not Zeus, in alarm, sent Hermes to Hades to bring Persephone back. The mother received her daughter with transports of joy, and lifted the ban she had placed upon the earth. The seed

sown now came up and produced abundance, and the earth was covered with fruits and flowers. She now consented to go back and dwell with the gods on Olympus; but before her departure, she taught Keleos and his daughters, with Triptolemus, Diokles, and Eumolpeus, the divine service, and all the solemnities which she required to be observed in her honor. Thus began the mysteries of Eleusis; the less, celebrated in February, in honor of Persephone; the greater, in August, in honor of Demeter herself.

7. The Eleusinian Mysteries. The mysteries, originally celebrated at Eleusis, in Attica, in honor of Demeter, came to be celebrated throughout Greece, and, in time, attained to an almost catholic supremacy. When the local governments were concentrated at Athens, that city became the centre of religion; a temple called the Eleusinian was erected therein as the national sanctuary of Demeter. The temple at Eleusis, however, retained its sacredness; and there the most solemn rites were performed. At first, only inhabitants of Attica were admitted to membership; afterwards, the privilege was extended to all Greeks.

These mysteries, in their aim, their spirit, and form of culture, bore more striking likeness to the Christian church than any other heathen institution. Their members were a brotherhood, whose object was the cultivation of all goodness, in the

present life; and of the hope of blessedness, in the life to come. They required, as a condition of membership, a consciousness of a direct divine action on the soul, and the experience of exalted religious feeling. The rites of initiation, it was believed, established a kinship of the soul with the divine nature, secured the divine favor, and introduced the person into a state of bliss.

Objection was made to the Orphic mysteries, that they promised salvation, in return for the mere observance of ritualistic acts. The Eleusinian mysteries were held to be superior, in that they promised salvation only to those who had the high-wrought experiences of initiation and who also lived a pious and just life.

The prescribed order of preparation and the mode of initiation: nine days' fasting and wandering around the shores, and on the plain of Eleusis in the night and in the dark of the moon, with torch in hand, searching for the lost goddess; the eager expectancy of the divine action on the soul; the sudden entrance, at the end of the nine days into the holy building, which was illuminated to a dazzling brightness; and the impressiveness of the magnificent ritual, which portrayed the life and glory of the deities by whom the mysteries were instituted brought the initiated to the highest pitch of divine rapture. There were various degrees of advancement, each having its own peculiar secrets and experiences. The candidate was

initiated into the lesser mysteries at Athens in February; but, in order to enjoy full membership, he must undergo a second initiation in the following September; and before he could be initiated into the higher degree, a year must pass from that date. Those who held office must have an initiation into a still higher degree, be possessed of still higher secrets, and pass through a higher experience.

8. Neo-Platonism. The Neo-Platonists held that knowledge and virtue were God's gifts, and are to be obtained only by self-abnegation on the part of man; that the sage may, when completely renouncing himself and resigning himself unresistingly to the divine influence, attain to the intuition of God, which is the highest step in philosophy. The business of man is to return to God, from whom he, as a sensuous being, has estranged himself. The means by which this return is to be accomplished are virtue, philosophic thought, and, above all, the immediate ecstatic intuition of God, and becoming one with him.

Plotinus, the most eminent of the Neo-Platonists, taught that, by nature's endowment, there are three grades of men. Men of the first grade are buried in the sensuous, regarding pleasure as the only good and pain as the only evil. Those of the second grade rise higher, but unable to discern that which is above them, become only virtuous, devote themselves to practical life,

aiming merely to make a right choice from among those things which are of inferior rank. Men of the third grade are of divine nature; gifted with higher power and keener vision, they turn toward the radiance which shines from above, rise into its presence and, despising all that is of earth, sojourn there, where is their true fatherland and where they become partakers of the true joy. The last, the highest end for man, is ecstatic elevation to the One truly good. When we look upon God we have reached our end and found our true rest; all disharmony is removed; we circle about God, in the movements of a divinely inspired dance, and behold him, the source of life, the principle of being, the cause of all good, the source and principle of the soul, and we enjoy perfect blessedness. Yet, this is not a beholding but only another manner of knowing; it is ecstasy, simplification, contact with God.

Not always are we able to abide in this blessed state, as we are not yet completely loosed from the bonds of the earthly. It is only too easy for the earthly to win back our regards; and only rarely does the direct vision of the supreme God fall to the lot of the best of men. Porphyry, the disciple of Plotinus, tells us that his master attained to this unification with God only four times during the six years of his association with him.

Porphyry differed from his master in holding that, in the ecstatic elevation and union with the

divine, the mind does not lose the consciousness of personality. The ecstasy is only a dream in which the soul, dead to the world, rises to a participation in the divine. It is an elevation above action, above liberty, and yet not an annihilation: it is an ennobling, restoration, or transformation of the individual nature.

In the treatise entitled *Iamblicus de Mysteriis*, which though not written by Iamblicus is supposed to have been written by one of his disciples, under his direction, the writer says:

The pomp of emperors becomes as nothing, in comparison with the glory that surrounds the hierophant. The priest is a prophet, full of deity; the subordinate powers of the upper world are at his bidding, for it is not a man, but a god, who speaks the word of power. Such a man lives no longer the life common to other men; he has exchanged the human life for the life divine; his nature is the instrument and vehicle of the deity, who fills and impels him. Men of this order do not employ, in the elevation they experience, the waking senses, as do others: they have no purpose of their own, no mastery over themselves; they speak wisdom which they do not understand; and their faculties, absorbed in a divine power, become the instruments of a superior will. Often, at the moment of inspiration, or when the afflatus has subsided, a fiery appearance is seen, which is caused by the entering or departing power; and those who are skilled in this wisdom can tell, by the character of this glory, the rank of the divinity who has

seized the reins of the mystic's soul and is guiding it at his will. Sometimes the body of the man, subject to this influence, is violently agitated; sometimes it is rigid and motionless. In some instances, sweet music is heard; in others, discordant and fearful sounds. The person of the subject has been known to dilate, and tower to a superhuman height; and sometimes, to be lifted up in the air. Frequently, not merely the ordinary exercises of reason, but sensation and animal life appear to have been suspended; the subject has not felt the application of fire: he has been pierced with spits and cut with knives, and has felt no pain. Yea, the more the body and the mind have been enfeebled by vigils and fasts; the more ignorant and mentally imbecile a youth may be who is brought under this influence, the more freely and unmixedly would the divine power be made manifest. So clearly are these wonders the work, not of human skill or wisdom, but of supernatural power.

9. Sufism. The Sufis, among the Mohammedans, made it the greatest aim of their lives to attain an ecstatic state, in which the soul enters the world of dreams, and becomes one with God.

Four stages were prescribed, for the ascent to that state. 1. Strict obedience to the ritual laws of Mohammedanism, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, alms, and ablution. 2. Rising above the outward ceremony to a nearer approach to the deity. 3. By continuous contemplation and devotion, rising to the true perception of the visible and the invisible; recognizing the God-head,

and holding an ecstatic relation to it. 4. The highest stage, in which man communicates directly with the deity. The means employed by some to reach the ecstatic state are rapid repetitions of the principal attributes of God. "No God but Allah: O God; O him; O just God; O living God; O revenging God"; the chant becoming louder and more violent, as it goes on. Then all stand in a circle, and each devotee, standing on his right foot, sways his left leg and his whole body backward and forward, or from side to side. Then begins the pirouette, on the left heel, the eyes being closed and the arms outstretched, when the attraction of God begins to operate, and the final ecstasy comes on.

10. The Medicine of the American Indian. Mr. Francis Parkman tells us that it is in religious ecstasy the American Indian finds the object which is to be his "medicine," or the charm of his life.

At the age of fourteen or fifteen the Indian boy blackens his face, retires to some solitary place, and remains for days without food. Superstitious expectancy, and the exhaustion of abstinence, rarely fail of their results. His sleep is haunted with visions, and the form which first, or most often appears, is that of his guardian Manitou; a beast, a bird, a fish, a serpent, or some other object, animate or inanimate. The young Indian henceforth wears about his person the object revealed in his dream, or some portion

of it, as a bone, a feather, a snake skin, or a tuft of hair. This, in the modern language of the forest or prairie, is known as his medicine. The Indian yields to it a sort of worship; propitiates it with offerings of tobacco; thanks it in prosperity; and upbraids it in disaster.[1]

Similar customs have prevailed among all the Indian tribes; and all have employed the dance to produce the ecstatic state.

[1] *The Jesuit in North America*, pp. lxx., lxxi.

CHAPTER II

The Ecstasy in the Christian World

IT would have been remarkable if mental and spiritual phenomena, similar to those we have seen in the heathen world, had not appeared in the Christian world. 1. In the man Christ Jesus, God, the creator, came into the closest relationship to man. The Son of God was filled with the divine spirit, by whom he was enabled to do many wonderful works. 2. He had promised that the same spirit should be given to his disciples, enabling them also to work miracles. 3. After the day of Pentecost, in fulfilment of his promise he endued them with his Spirit, who wrought in them those wonderful phenomena, called "spiritual gifts." 4. The worldly condition of the early Christians would naturally drive them to seek the pleasures of life in the inner world. The deep corruption and the bitter hatred of both Jews and Romans, together with the expectation of the millennium as immanent, would naturally cause them to look with contempt on the pleasures, honors, and riches of the world, and to turn,

with zest, to the pleasures of religion. 5. They were acquainted with both the Eastern and the Western pagan mysticism; and among them were doubtless persons who, before their conversion to Christianity, had experienced the ecstasies of the Jewish Essenes and Theraputæ, or of the Grecian Eleusinians. 6. Observing all around them exaltations of religious feeling, which were said to have been produced by the heathen gods, they would naturally be affected with a strong desire for such experiences in themselves, in order to show that their own religion was, in no respect, inferior to that of the pagan. It is remarkable, however, that, notwithstanding all these antecedent probabilities, the early Christians were a sober-minded people. The reason for their exemption from enthusiasm may be found in the fact that the founder of their religion was so eminently practical. He was neither a dreamer nor an enthusiast. In this teaching and his works he dealt with the sublimest realities, but he did so in the calmest and most self-possessed manner, never in raptures, not even on the mount of transfiguration. They had the repeated and emphatic declaration of their Lord and his apostles, that their religion was more a matter of right living than of exalted feeling. Their Lord had expressly warned them against accepting the prevailing opinion, which counted the ecstasy to be an experience of the highest spiritual value.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." When the members of the church of Corinth coveted the spiritual gifts, for the pleasure, or for the distinction, to be derived from them, and were making those gifts the occasion of jealousy, contention, and disorder, the apostle Paul exhorted them to covet earnestly the best of all spiritual gifts, love, which was better than the gift of tongues, or of prophecy, or of faith that could remove mountains. Peter's exhortation to the brethren was: "Having your conversation honest among the gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God, in the day of visitation—for so is the will of God that, with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

That these declarations and exhortations had effect, there can be no doubt; for it appears plainly in the history of the church that the early Christians impressed the un-Christian world more by their right living and their love to one

another than by the raptures of their religious feeling.

Early in the second century, the Gnostics, Christian believers, who had been devoted to the Platonic philosophy, claimed to have the power of knowing God and divine things by direct cognition, but they were not enthusiasts. Their superior knowledge they professed to have obtained by means of superior natural powers, not by any supernatural work within them.

It was not till after the middle of the second century that we find any rapturous experiences attributed to the immediate action of the Holy Spirit; but, from that time on to the present day, the Christian church has exhibited an abundance of phenomena similar to those we have seen abounding in the heathen world.

Montanism. We meet these phenomena first among the Phrygians, a people who had been noted for their mercurial temperament and their strong emotional nature. Their national religion, the worship of Cybele and Bacchus, was a religion of frenzies and ecstasies. Two causes, the one general, and the other special, may have contributed to the development of enthusiasm among the Phrygian Christians:

1. That dreadful plague which swept over the Roman Empire in the middle of the second century was interpreted by the heathen as an infliction for the dishonor the gods were suffering

from the prevalence of the new religion, and everywhere the terror of the heathen populace, being converted into fury, vented itself on the Christians. The peculiarities of the national character caused the persecutions in Phrygia to be especially unrelenting and bloody; and this, together with the expectation of the instant coming of Christ, caused the enthusiasm of the Christians to rise to the highest pitch.

2. This rise of enthusiasm was one of the natural reactions which have characterized the history of Christianity in all ages. The imperfection belonging to human nature is sure to corrupt every phase of the Christian life. On the one hand, the staid and intellectual, the lovers of truth, will become cold-hearted and haughty formalists, faultless in ritual, sound in doctrine, but unscrupulous and loose in life. This will provoke a reaction, in which the importance of doctrine and form will be depreciated, while warmth of heart and fervor of spirit will be exalted. It is probable that the enthusiasm of the second century was a reaction from the coldness, deadness, and corruption of Gnosticism or orthodoxy.

It was about the year 157 A.D. that Montanus appeared as a reformer of the church and an exemplar of the fervid type of Christian life. He fell into certain states of transport, in which he was no longer master of his own consciousness,

and was made, as he supposed, the organ of a supermundane spirit. In this state he foretold the approach of new persecutions and exhorted the Christians to lead a life of more rigid austerity, and to make a more undaunted confession of their faith; he extolled the martyr's crown, and charged the faithful to stake everything, in order to win that crown. Claiming to be a prophet sent of God, he announced the nearness of Christ's second coming and the approach of the millennial reign. He declared that by himself the church was to be elevated to a higher stage of spiritual life, and that through him a loftier system of Christian morals was to be revealed. He claimed that the things which Christ said that the apostles were not able to receive, were now revealed to him. He held that, in the religious ecstasy, Christian prophets and prophetesses received revelations which were to conduct the church onward to its final consummation, that the Almighty took possession of the soul of the prophet and spoke to it in his own name. He alleges that, in one of his own ecstatic states God said through him, "Behold the man is a lyre, and I sweep over him, as a plectrum; the man sleeps and I wake. Behold, it is the Lord, who estranges the souls of men from themselves, and gives them souls." He alleges that, at another time, God said through him, "I am the Lord, the Almighty God, who take up my abode

in man. I am neither an angel nor a messenger, but I am come, as the Lord himself, God the Father."

So new and strange were these phenomena in the church that many Christians questioned their genuineness, on the ground that the Spirit, in making revelations, would not set men beside themselves. The Christian rhetorician Militiades wrote a work to show that the ecstasy was a state of mind at variance with the character of a true prophet. Some were inclined to attribute the ecstasy to the agency of evil spirits, maintaining that the Holy Spirit is a spirit of soberness and self-possession. Clement of Alexandria represented the ecstasy as the sign of a false prophet and of actuation by the evil spirit. He was unwilling, however, to deny that there was anything of an ecstatic nature in the prophets of the Old Testament, and unwilling also to condemn everything that proceeded from the so-called Christian prophets. The prevalence and strength of the opposition of the church to these experiences may be inferred from a purported divine communication to one of the Phrygian prophetesses, Maximilla. In this communication, the spirit, in her, vindicating himself from the charge that he set men beside themselves, said: "I am chased, as a wolf from the flock. I am no wolf; I am word, and spirit, and power."

Montanism, taking its rise in Phrygia, spread, like an epidemic, throughout Macedonia and Greece to Rome, and even beyond into Spain and Gaul; yet it did not affect, in any place, more than a small proportion of the members of the church. As it gained strength it became arrogant, and set itself up as the highest type of Christian life. It availed itself of the distinction between the Greek words for spirit and soul, the one designating the higher faculties which are the peculiar endowment of man; the other, designating the powers of the animal life, the senses, appetites, and passions which man has in common with the lower animals. It won over one of the great fathers, Tertullian of Carthage, who wrote an able defence of it. The more sober views of the spiritual life were so predominant, however, that Montanism became almost extinct at the close of the fourth century.

A sign was most rigidly required, in Old Testament times, as an attestation of the inspiration of the prophet of the Lord. Neither his own claim, nor his exalted feelings, nor even the fulfilment of his prophecies, was sufficient for this purpose.[1]

[1] Upon this subject, John David Michaelis says: "It was at that time the universal propensity of mankind to pry into future events; and it was no less universal to regard religion as a means of gratifying this curiosity. If God, therefore, desired efficiently to keep his people from being carried away by the torrent that

It is to be remembered that the Old Testament prophets gave their prophetic utterances, for the most part, in an exalted state of religious feeling, like that of the heathen and Christian rapture, and that they did not allege that the feeling was itself evidence of supernatural origin. They either gave, or were ready to give, the required proofs of such origin in miracles wrought or predictions fulfilled. The ecstasies of the priests of Baal were probably quite as genuine as those of Elijah; but Elijah required them to give the proofs of inspiration, which he himself

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overflowed other nations, and from seeking insight into futurity from superstition or false religion, it was necessary that the true religion should give them what every false religion pretended to give."—*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, i., 197, 198.

"Now all these vain arts, in order to pry into the future and all divinations whatever, unless where God was consulted by prophet or by Urim and Thummin (the sacred lot, kept by the High Priest) were expressly prohibited by the statutes of *Lev.* xix., 26, 31; xx., 6, 23, 27; *Deut.* xviii., 9–12."—*Ibid.*, iv., 84.

"There were two cases, in which a person was held as convicted of this crime, and of course liable to its punishment. 1. If he had prophesied anything in the name of any other god, whether it took place or not; he was, at all events, considered as a false prophet, and, as such, stoned to death. *Deut.* xiii., 2–6. If a prophet spake in the name of the true God, he enjoyed, so long as he remained unconvicted of any imposture, those rights which were stated under Art. xxxvi., and which were founded in the constitution of the Israelitish polity, and he could not be punished; but when the event, which he predicted, did not come to pass, he was regarded as an audacious impostor, and, as such, stoned. *Deut.* xviii., 21, 22."—*Ibid.*, iv., 71–72.

was required to give, and under the same sanctions; that is, proof by special miracle, and under the sanction of the death penalty. He inflicted on them only the penalty which he himself would have had to suffer, in case of his failure. Our Lord promised his disciples that their possession of supernatural gifts should be so accredited. "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."[1]

We conclude that unless the alleged supernaturally wrought experiences in the Christian world present something more than their own extraordinary character, some indubitable signs of their supernatural origin, we shall be compelled to refer them, as we do the like experiences in the heathen world, to natural causes.

[1] *Mark* xvi., 18.

Part III

Conversion

CHAPTER I

What is Conversion?

MYSTICAL experiences are believed by the Christian world to occur in the Christian life, already begun; conversion is a similar experience in which the spiritual life is supposed to begin. It is held that none but the converted can be accepted as having undergone the change from spiritual death to spiritual life. Questions relating to conversion are, therefore, of far more importance than questions relating to the religious ecstasy of the mystic. We shall need, as a first step in our consideration of these questions, to obtain a definite idea of what conversion is held to be.

The definition of conversion given by the Rev. Enoch Pond, D.D., in his treatise on conversion we shall accept, as sufficiently precise and comprehensive.

Conversion is the *first active turning of the soul's affection unto God.* It is the commencement of holy affections in the sinner's heart. Up to this time,

his heart has been entirely sinful. It has been wholly under the influence of self and the world, so that holy affections have been entirely excluded; they have had no place there. But in the moment of conversion, under the influence of appropriate thought and of the Holy Spirit, the first holy exercise or affection is put forth. . . . Holy affections assume different forms, and have different names applied to them, according as they are put forth in view of different objects; but whatever name or form, they all possess the same general *nature* or *character*. Thus, the same kind of affection, which, in view of the divine character, is holy, complacent *love*, will, in view of personal transgression, be *repentance;* in view of Christ as a Saviour, it will be *faith* or *trust;* in view of the divine favors, it will be *gratitude;* and, in view of the divine government, it will be *submission*. . . . Nor is conversion a change of any kind, in which the subject of it is entirely *passive*, and for which he can do nothing but wait. Most unconverted persons seem to regard the question in this light: they regard it as something in reference to which they have no responsibility, have nothing to do, and for which they can do nothing but submissively wait until the blessing is bestowed. Now, there can hardly be a greater mistake than this, or one of more disastrous influence. The effect of such an impression can only be to excuse and quiet the soul in sin, and put off that great and needed change without which we perish. . . .

Conversion is important, Thirdly, as it is the only way to secure the approbation and favor of the Su-

preme Being. . . . I urge Fourthly, the importance of conversion, from the consideration that it saves from eternal death. But conversion does more than save from death. I urge Fifthly, that it secures life; immortal life and bliss to the soul. It introduces those who experience it into the family of God. It makes them heirs of all the promises. When they appear in the other worlds, they shall go to dwell with Christ, with the holy angels, and with the redeemed in the paradise of God above. . . . They are to have their eternal dwelling amid the glories of the heavenly state.[1]

Turning from this definition of conversion and the statement of its importance to the New Testament for authoritative information on the subject, we find that the word does not occur there in the sense here given, and that our Lord in all his teaching does not give this, or any other definition of conversion or any statement of its importance. In only one instance does he seem to imply that conversion is a necessary condition of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2] Here, however, the word rendered, be converted, is in the active, not in the passive voice, and must be rendered, "Except ye turn and become as little children

[1] *Conversion; Its Nature and Importance*, 6–9, 169, 172.
[2] *Matt.* xviii., 3.

. . ." The same word is used by our Lord and by the apostle Paul in quoting *Isaiah* vi., 10: "This people's heart is waxed gross and their ears dull of hearing lest at any time they . . . should understand with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them."[1] In all these cases, and also in *Isaiah*, the word is in the active voice and means turn, or turn again, and is so rendered in the revised version.

It is so rendered in *Acts* iii., 19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out," and, in this case, the word means change of conduct only, since the word translated repent means change of mind. The same word is used in *Luke* i., 16, 17: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord and he shall go before him, in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children"; in xvii., 4: "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him"; in *Acts* xi., 21: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord"; and in *Gal.* iv., 9, "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage." In all these cases the word is in the active voice, as it is in *Matt.* xviii., 3, and is proof conclusive that there it should

[1] *Matt.* xiii., 15. *Mark* iv., 12. *Acts* xxviii., 27.

be rendered turn or turn again, and not, be converted. Nowhere in the New Testament has the word conversion the sense now given to it; nowhere is its importance set forth in any such statement as that given in the work from which we have quoted. From that work it appears that the Holy Spirit is a necessary agent in effecting a true conversion, but not the sole agent, nor even the primal agent; he must wait till the subject himself begins to act. Human agency and natural causes operate efficiently in connection with the divine agency, in the production of a conversion that is genuine, gracious, and saving. Now every one must see that it is a matter of great, nay of vital, importance that the natural and supernatural factors in conversion should be ascertained with at least proximate certainty; for it is the presence of the supernatural factor that determines the present spiritual state of the individual and his eternal destiny.

It is admitted by evangelical Christians that there are conversions which are not genuine, gracious, and saving, and yet are so like to the genuine as to be indistinguishable from them. Both the subjects of them and others may mistake the one kind for the other. The question of genuineness is a vital question, and the answer depends wholly upon the answer to the question, whether the supernatural agency was present or absent; if present, the conversion was genuine

and saving, no matter what may have been the decline in the ardor of the affection or the defection in the life; if absent, the conversion was spurious, not saving, no matter what may have been the state of the man's feeling at the time; he was deceived; he has had a name to live while he was dead, and he may finally perish.

If we should concede the reality of the immediate or miraculous divine agency in conversion, then since the action of that agency is dependent upon, and complicated with, human agency and the operation of natural causes, it is of the utmost importance that the action of the divine agency should be recognized with certainty; for it is that alone gives to conversion its saving character.

CHAPTER II

The Divine Agency in Conversion

IT is reasonable to suppose that the divine agency in conversion would be manifested by marks so distinct and uniform that it could not be mistaken, and, therefore, that there could not be any great differences of opinion in the Christian world on the subject. We find there, however, very great differences of opinion; not only differences, but glaring inconsistencies. Those who hold that conversion is necessary to make a man a Christian, and that it is supernaturally produced, acknowledge, as true Christians, men in whose lives they admit that all the fruits of the Spirit abound, but who say that they have never known any experience which they recognize as marking their transition from death into life.

Not only are such individuals recognized as Christians, but whole denominations, who deny the alleged import of the experience, deny its supernatural origin, and avow that they never had it, are so recognized; their ordination and

their ordinances are regarded as valid; their acts of discipline are respected; letters of dismission from them are accepted; and there is co-operation with them in general Christian work.

The uncertainty and the diversity of opinion on this subject appear also in the controversies which have been waged thereon. At an early day in New England, a question arose in the churches about the rights and privileges of adults who had been baptized in infancy, but had declined to become communicants, for the reason that they had not passed through that experience which the church, and they themselves, believed to be necessary to make a man a Christian; who yet desired to have their children baptized. The granting of the privilege depended on the question whether they were members of the church or not; for if members, they were entitled to the privilege. Some contended that they were made members and were recognized as such by their baptism in infancy; and that, as the church had not taken any action casting them out, they were still members. The question, however, was beset with some practical difficulties. Some of those who were requesting the privilege were profane in their conversation and ungodly in their lives. Some members of the church held that, even if this were so, the request ought to be granted, as the children were a party in interest.

Others held that the baptism of these persons made them members of the church universal, but not members of any particular church, and that the particular church could not recognize them as having any rights or privileges therein.

The Congregational Synod, at Boston, in 1662, gave the following decision on the subject:

1. They that, according to the Scriptures, are members of the visible church, are subjects of baptism.

2. The members of the visible church, according to the Scriptures, are confederate believers in particular churches and their infant seed; that is, children in minority whose parents, one or both, are in covenant.

3. The infant seed of confederate visible believers are members of the same church with their parents; and when grown up, are personally under the watch, discipline, and government of the church.

4. Those adult persons are not, therefore, to be admitted to full communion (the Lord's supper) because they are, and continue to be, without such further qualifications as the word of God requireth thereunto.

5. Church members, who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the

covenant before the church; wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church; their children are to be baptized.

This, which was called "The Half-way Covenant," maintained that persons, who had been baptized in infancy, on making a profession of faith and good intentions, which was still short of a profession of saving faith, were to have their children baptized. Some maintained that such a covenant and confession, which men who regarded themselves as unconverted might sincerely make, entitled them to the Lord's supper, on the ground that the sacrament of the Lord's supper was not only an edifying, but also a converting, ordinance. This view was strenuously opposed by Jonathan Edwards, in a treatise published in 1746, in which he contended that: "none ought to be admitted to the communion and the privileges of members of the visible church of Christ, in complete standing, but such as are, in profession and in the eye of the church's Christian judgment, godly or gracious persons." His congregation at Northampton had been indoctrinated in the opposite view by the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, the maternal grandfather and immediate predecessor of Mr. Edwards, in the pastorate of the church; and this difference

of opinion, between him and his people, resulted in a sundering of the pastoral relation in 1750.

One of the controversies, which led to the division of the first Presbyterian Synod in America, and the formation of the Synods of Philadelphia and New York in 1741, was on the question: What evidence of faith and holiness ought the church to require of candidates for admission to the Lord's supper; or what ought to be regarded as credible evidence of piety which, if presented by any who were duly qualified otherwise, should be regarded as entitling them to the privilege of the Lord's table. The "New Side," represented by the Synod of New York, charged that the "Old Side," which was represented by the Synod of Philadelphia, held that the unregenerate and ungodly were entitled to the Lord's supper: while the "Old Side" charged the "New Side" with holding that none but the regenerate, and those who could be certainly known, and knew themselves to be such, were entitled to the privilege. The real difference was, that the "Old Side" were opposing that method of examining candidates which proceeded on the assumption that the church can judge the heart, and determine who are, and who are not regenerate; the decision being based on certain experiences related by the applicant, which were supposed to have been supernaturally produced, and were judged to be evidences of the new birth. The

"New Side" insisted that those who were really regenerate could, and should be required, to furnish such evidences of their new birth. The seventh specification, brought by the "Old Side" against the New at the meeting of the Synod in 1741, was: "their, or some of them, preaching and maintaining, that all true converts are as certain of their gracious state as a person can be of what he knows by his outward senses; and are able to give a narrative of the time and manner of their conversion; or else they conclude them to be in a natural or graceless state; and, that a gracious person can judge of another's gracious state, otherwise than by his profession and life."

The warmest controversies on this subject have taken place after great revivals of religion, and in some cases, have called forth elaborate treatises—notably, that of Jonathan Edwards on *The Affections*, which was intended to set forth the difference between those experiences which have been supernaturally produced and those which have been produced by natural causes.

After the great revival in Northampton, in the years 1740–1741, Mr. Edwards was induced to publish the *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*, to which were added five sermons: 1. On *Rom.* iv., 5, *Justification by Faith alone;* 2. On *Luke* xvi., 16, *Pressing into the Kingdom;* 3. On *Ruth* i., 16, *Ruth's Resolution;* 4. *Rom.* iii., 19, *The Justice of*

God in the Damnation of Sinners; 5. *Rev.* v., 5, 6, *The Excellency of Jesus Christ.* The first four of these discourses were preached immediately before and during the awakening, and were among the probable causes of it, the last being selected by Mr. Edwards himself, partly, his biographer says, "because he thought that a discourse on such an evangelical subject, would properly follow others that were chiefly awakening; and that something of the excellency of the Saviour was proper to succeed those things that were to show the necessity of salvation."

The *Narrative* was republished in England, with an introduction by Isaac Watts and John Guyse; was extensively read, and produced a deep impression throughout England and Scotland. The authors of the Introduction say:

> There is a spot of ground, as we are here informed, wherein there are twelve or fourteen towns and villages, chiefly situated in the country of Hampshire, near the banks of the River Connecticut, within the compass of thirty miles, wherein it pleased God, two years ago, to display his sovereign mercy, in the conversion of a great multitude of souls in a short space of time. . . . The great God has seemed to act over again the miracle of Gideon's fleece, which was plentifully watered with the dews of heaven, while the rest of the earth round about was dry, and had no such blessing.[1]

[1] Works in two vols. London, 1834, i., 344.

Through the influence of this *Narrative*, a similar revival broke out in Cambuslang, the parish of the Rev. William McCulloch, four miles from Glasgow, and thence spread to upwards of thirty towns and villages. In both cases, opposite opinions were held as to the character of the work, which resulted in controversies and in the division of churches.

On the visit of the Rev. George Whitefield to Northampton, in the fall of 1740, we are told that Mr. Edwards

> took an opportunity to converse with Mr. Whitefield, alone, at some length, on the subject of impulses, and assigned the reason he had to think that he gave too much heed to such things. . . . He also took occasion, in the presence of others, to converse with Mr. Whitefield, at some length, about his too customary practice of judging other persons to be unconverted; . . . and pronouncing ministers and other members of the Christian church unconverted.

Mr. Edwards says, in the *Narrative*, that there were

> outcries, and falling down, and swooning, in the time of public and social worship; and singing and praying in the streets. . . . These people went so far before them (the other members of the church) in raptures, and violent emotions of the affections, and in vehement zeal for, what they called, boldness for Christ;

our people were ready to think was owing to far greater attainments in grace and intimacy with heaven.

Similar manifestations attended the revival in Scotland, and it appears that there also the spiritual value and the supernatural origin of the manifestations were questioned by the moderates in the church. It was this uncertainty as to the presence of the supernatural in the experience of conversion and the unseemly controversies on the subject that called forth Mr. Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, his *Treatise Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Church*, and his published reply to the Rev. Solomon Williams's book. In the preface to the first work, Mr. Edwards says:

There is no question of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in than this: What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God and entitled to his eternal reward? Or, which comes to the same thing: What is the nature of true religion; and wherein lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue, which is acceptable in the sight of God? But, though it be of such importance, and though we have clear light in the Word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point wherein professing Christians differ

more one from another. . . . It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the kingdom of Christ. . . . And, by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unsettled in religion, and know not where to set their foot, or what to think; and many are brought into doubts whether there be any thing at all in religion; and heresy, infidelity, and atheism, greatly prevail. . . . What I am at now, is to show the nature and signs of the gracious operations of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever, that are not of a saving nature.[1]

It has been, for a long time, the judgment of the Christian world, that the wonderfully acute and elaborate discriminations, in his three long treatises, have not succeeded in accomplishing what their author intended them to do; that is, to draw a line of demarcation which no one could mistake, between the common and the gracious, the natural and the supernatural, in Christian experience. The failure of a mind so acute as that of Edwards to make the distinction, might well suggest the impossibility of making it. But, unless such distinction can be made, the supposition of miraculous agency cannot be sustained. The

[1] Work in two vols. London, 1834, i., 234–235.

admission of inability to distinguish a supposed miraculous conversion of water into wine from the natural process—the absorption of water by the roots of the vine; the conveyance through the ducts to the cluster; the ripening of the fruit; —the pressing out and fermentation of the juice —is equivalent to an abandonment of the hypothesis of miraculous production.

CHAPTER III

The Variety of Means Employed and the Difference in Result

THE variety in the means employed to produce conversion, and the difference in the resulting experience, can hardly be regarded as according well with the assumption of supernatural agency; for it is to be presumed that all supernatural divine action to any one end will be alike in all cases, since it is absolutely unconditioned. The healing of the impotent man by our Lord, and his healing of the one who was born blind, may be supposed to have been works that differed in kind; but it is to be assumed that his healing of impotent men would be a work of the same character in all cases, and so also would be his healing of all blind men. The variety of means employed to produce conversion at different times, and the differences in the resulting experiences, suggest a conditioning, which may well enough be supposed to affect the operation of a natural cause but not the operation of a supernatural cause.

Theology. The interest of men in the science of

theology has sprung, in large measure, from its bearing on the experience of conversion, and not, as in the sciences of nature, from a desire to see facts in their proper relations to one another and combined in an orderly and complete system of knowledge. Soteriology has been the central theme of theology, its principal object being to exhibit unto men the plan of salvation, with the hope that it will operate as a natural cause of the experience of conversion that experience being generally supposed to be necessary to salvation. Many theologians have undertaken, in special works, to employ the doctrine of theology for this purpose.

We shall take the statements in a work entitled *The Way of Life* as an example of the employment of the doctrines of theology as a means of producing conversion.[1]

1. There must be a knowledge of sin.

The eyes must be opened to see sin as it is represented in the word of God, as an exceeding evil and bitter thing, as extending, not merely to overt acts or outbreaks of passion, but deeply seated in the heart, polluting, at the fountain, the streams of life; as really deserving the punishment which God has denounced against it; and as having such hold upon

[1] *The Way of Life*, by Charles Hodge, Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. American Sunday-School Union, p. 106.

the inward principles of our nature, that its power cannot be broken by any ordinary exertion.

This knowledge of sin, which enters so essentially into the nature of true conviction, is derived from the law, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. "I had not known sin," said the apostle, "but by the law." . . . A thousand things which before had appeared indifferent or trivial, he now saw to be aggravated offences; and especially the deep-seated evil of his heart—the great source of all other sin.[1]

2. A sense of personal unworthiness.

There is, in genuine conviction, a sense of personal unworthiness, . . . this personal sense of unworthiness is the principal part of conviction of sin. It is the opposite of that false notion of our own excellence, which we are so apt to indulge. It destroys our self-complacency and eradicates the disposition to justify ourselves or extenuate our guilt. Where this judgment of the conscience, or this sense of personal unworthiness exists, leading the sinner to lay his hand upon his mouth in the presence of God, and to bow at his feet as unworthy, undeserving of mercy, there, as far as this point is concerned, is genuine conviction.[2]

3. A conviction of our condemnation before God.

[1] *The Way of Life*, pp. 107–111.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 113–117.

A sense of sin is a sense of unworthiness and a sense of unworthiness involves a sense of just exposure to the divine displeasure. . . . When there is a clear discovery of the evil of sin, with no concomitant apprehension of the true plan of salvation, despair is the natural result. The judgment of the conscience is known to be true when it pronounces our sins to be deserving of death. And unless the soul sees how God can be just and yet justify the sinner, it cannot hope for mercy. Nothing can be more pitiable than a soul in this condition.[1]

4. Insufficiency of works.

Another essential characteristic of genuine conviction is the persuasion that our own good works are entirely insufficient to recommend us to God, or to be the ground of our acceptance before him. . . . The distressed soul imagines that if it could be more distressed, more humbled, more touched with sorrow or remorse, it then might find acceptance. . . . But this hardness of heart, this want of due tenderness and penitence, is a sin which must first be got out of the way, before the others can be remitted. . . . It is included in what has been said that a consciousness of our own weakness is a necessary ingredient, or consequent of true conviction. There is not only a giving up of our own righteousness, but of our own strength.[2]

[1] *The Way of Life*, pp. 119–121.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 123–129.

5. Repentance.

As the consciousness of unworthiness, when we think of others, produces shame, so when we think of ourselves, it produces self-abhorrence. . . . The soul bows down before God under the consciousness of inexcusable guilt. It stands self-condemned, and, instead of regarding God as a hard master, it acknowledges that he is righteous in all his demands, and in all his judgments. . . . The confession of sin, on which the Scriptures lay so much stress, is the outward expression of this inward sense of ill-desert. It is not enough that we should secretly condemn ourselves. God requires a full and ingenuous confession of our sins. . . . There is a gleam of hope and glow of love pervading the exercises of the true penitent, which impart to all his exercises a peculiarity of character, and cause them to produce effects specifically different from those which flow from despairing remorse, or the agitations of an awakened conscience. . . . The one is the sorrow of the malefactor; the other the sorrow of a child. . . . The penitent may not know how God can be just and yet the justifier of sinners, and yet be persuaded not only that he is merciful, but that he has found a ransom and can consistently save us from going down into the pit. . . . That repentance, therefore, which is unto life, is a turning; not a being driven away from sin by fear and stress of conscience but a forsaking it as evil and hateful, with sincere sorrow, humility, and confession, and a returning to God; because he is good and willing to forgive,

with a determination to live in obedience to his commandments.[1]

The discovery of the justice of God serves to awaken conscience and often produces a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. This is the natural and reasonable effect of a clear apprehension of the rectitude of the divine character, as a judge who renders to every one his due.

6. Justification.

The state of mind described in the preceding chapter (on the conviction of sin) cannot be long endured. Some way of satisfying the demands of conscience must be adopted. When the mind is enlightened by divine truth and duly impressed with a sense of guilt, it cannot fail anxiously to inquire, How can man be just with God? The answer given to this question decides the character of our religion, and if practically adopted, our future destiny. To give a wrong answer, is to mistake the way to heaven. It is to err where error is fatal. . . . The obedience which the law demands, is called righteousness; and those who render that obedience are called righteous. To ascribe righteousness to any one, or to pronounce him righteous, is the Scriptural meaning of the word "to justify." . . . When God justifies a man, he declares him to be righteous. To justify never means to make holy. It is said to be sinful to justify the wicked; but it could never be sinful to render the wicked holy. . . . Could the law pronounce righteous, and thus give title

[1] *The Way of Life*, pp. 225–234.

to the promised life to those who had broken its commands, there would have been no necessity of any other provision for the salvation of men; but, as the law cannot thus lower its demands, justification by the law is impossible. . . . The whole Scriptures, from beginning to end, are crowded with condemnations of the doctrine of justification by works. . . . Unless we are freed from the law, not as a rule of duty, but as prescribing the conditions of acceptance with God, justification is for us impossible. . . . Believers are freed from the law, as prescribing the conditions of their acceptance with God; it is no longer incumbent upon them, in order to justification, to fulfil its demand of perfect obedience, or to satisfy its penal exactions. But how is this deliverance effected? . . . It is not by the abrogation of the law, either as to its precepts or penalty. . . . By the mystery of vicarious obedience and suffering. . . . This is the gospel of the grace of God. . . . The Scriptures teach us that the Son of God, . . . perfectly obeyed that law, and suffered its penalty, and thus, by satisfying its demands, delivered us from its bondage and introduced us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. . . . It is thus then the Scriptures answer the question, How can a man be just with God? When the soul is burdened with a sense of sin, when it sees how reasonable and holy is that law which demands perfect obedience and which threatens death as the penalty of transgression; when it feels the absolute impossibility of ever satisfying these just demands by its own obedience and sufferings, it is then that the revelation of Jesus Christ as our righteousness is felt to be the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. Destitute

of all righteousness in ourselves we have our righteousness in him. What we could not do he has done for us. The righteousness, therefore, on the ground of which the sentence of justification is passed on the believing sinner, is not his own but that of Jesus Christ.[1]

7. Faith.

If God has revealed a plan of salvation for sinners, they must, in order to be saved, acquiesce in its provisions. By whatever name it may be called, the thing to be done is to approve and accept of the terms of salvation presented in the gospel. . . . As justification is pardon and acceptance on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, acquiescence in the plan of salvation involves the recognition and acceptance of the work of Christ as the only ground of justification before God. . . . The word by which this acceptance of Christ is commonly expressed in the Bible, is faith. . . . Assent to a speculative or abstract truth is a speculative act; assent to a moral truth is a moral act; assent to a promise made to ourselves, is an act of trust. . . . In the language of the Bible, faith in the promise of God is a believing reliance, and no blessing is connected with mere assent as distinguished and separated from reliance. . . . Men, who all their lives have neglected or reviled the truth, and who may have accumulated a treasury of objections to the authority of the Scriptures, are often brought to believe by a power which they cannot resist. . . .

[1] *The Way of Life*, pp. 145–190.

Here is a faith very different, in its origin, nature, and effects, from that which rests upon the authority of men, or upon external evidence and argument. . . . It is faith which rests upon the manifestation, by the Holy Spirit, of the excellence, beauty, and suitableness of the truth. . . . That faith, which is the gift of God, which arises from his opening our eyes to see the excellence of the truth, is attended with joy and love. Those feelings are as immediately and necessarily attendant on this kind of faith as pleasure is on the perception of beauty. . . . When the mind is perplexed and anxious from a sense of sin and the accusations of conscience; when the troubled spirit looks round for some way of escape from the just displeasure of God, the voice of mercy from the lips of the Son of God is, Come unto me, believe upon me, submit to be saved by me. Till this is done nothing is done. And when this cordial act of faith in Christ is exercised, we are accepted for his sake, and he undertakes to save us from the dominion and condemnation of our sins.[1]

Upon this description of the process of conversion, two or three observations are to be made. 1. That the doctrines, here set forth, if seriously and earnestly dwelt upon, in the order given, will excite the emotions which are held to constitute conversion; and that the conversion, thus produced, will be eminently rational; but that the doctrines, thus dwelt upon, operate as natural causes. 2. That in this description,

[1] *The Way of Life*, pp. 191–218.

no direct divine action upon the soul is alleged to take place except the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit; which, as we have seen (p. 21), may be providential and not miraculous. 3. That this type of conversion is held to be necessary to salvation. The author says: "The answer to this question (How can a man be just with God?) decides the character of our religion; and, if practically adopted, our future destiny. To give a wrong answer is to mistake the way to heaven. It is to err where error is fatal." Of the acceptance of justification through Christ by faith he says, "Till this is done nothing is done."

While we admit the genuineness and the spiritual value of the religious feelings, thus excited, we cannot admit the momentous consequences which are alleged to be dependent upon the conversion thus produced. It is probable that a benevolent desire to persuade men to be converted and thus secure salvation has led the author to take a position inconsistent with the position he has elsewhere taken and firmly maintained. He was one of the most catholic of theologians. He recognized, as belonging to the church of Christ, whole denominations which required no conversion, produced by these doctrines, as a term of membership. He subscribed to the definition of the church contained in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church:

"The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ; and of submission to his laws." "A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and holy living, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures; and submitting to a certain form of government." He believed that children, dying in infancy, are saved; he believed, with the evangelical Christian world, that it is regeneration secures salvation to both the dying infant and the living adult. He believed that a true conversion is a consequent or an effect of regeneration; not an antecedent or cause of regeneration; and not necessarily an immediate consequent.

That the Christian world, even that part of it which is most orthodox and evangelical, does not believe that a conversion springing from and formed by the theological doctrines set forth in *The Way of Life* is necessary to salvation, appears from the following facts. 1. The fact that they acknowledge as true Christians the members of denominations which reject the doctrine of the imputation of sin and of righteousness, and the doctrine of the death of Christ as a vicarious sacrifice. 2. The fact that these doctrines were not factors, either first or last, in the experiences of the mystics, which all acknowledge to have

been truly Christian experiences. 3. The fact that these doctrines are absent from certain works which are universally accepted as spiritual classics, describing the highest type of Christian experience, such as *The Imitation of Christ* and *The Germania Theologia*. 4. The fact that some of those who believed every one of these doctrines have experienced a conversion in which these doctrines do not appear to have been factors at all, notably that of Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, and others (see Appendix) and yet the conversion has been universally accepted as genuine. Jonathan Edwards tells us that he had from his childhood many strong religious impressions, that seemed to be truly Christian; and that, for long periods, he seemed to live the life of a true Christian; but he thus describes the experience, which he regarded as his conversion:

The first instance I remember of that sort of inward sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was in reading the words *1 Tim.* i., 17. "Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul and was, as it were, diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the divine Being: a new sense, quite different from anything I had ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought, within myself, how excellent a being that was; and how happy I should

be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him to heaven; and be, as it were, swallowed up in him for ever. I kept saying and, as it were, singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought that there was anything spiritual, or of a saving nature in this. From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. Those words, *Cant.* ii., 1, used to be abundantly with me. The words seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Christ; "I am the rose of sharon and the lily of the valley." The whole book of *Canticles* used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of the world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas, or imaginations, of being alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ and wrapped and swallowed up in God. The sense of divine things would often, of a sudden, kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart, an ardor of soul, that I knew not how to express. . . . The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love, seemed to

appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as the thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. . . . I felt God, if I may so speak, at the first appearance of a thunder-storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself, in order to view the clouds and see the lightning play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder; which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing or chant forth my meditations, or to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.[1]

Up to the last quarter of the last century, that large part of the Christian world which is called evangelical regarded all unconverted persons as unregenerate, lost sinners, and held that a true conversion must begin with what was called conviction, a deep and agonizing sense of sin, produced by a full apprehension of the demands of the law of God and of the terrors of its threaten-

[1] *Works*, i., p. lv.

ings, accompanied by a recognition of the justice of God in condemning the sinner to eternal perdition. This conviction must be followed by a reaction, in which the previous agonizing emotions were supplanted by joyful emotions of corresponding intensity, produced by the recognition of Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice, suffering, in the sinner's stead, the penalty of all his sins. In order to produce this alternation of emotion, the law, in the full extent of its demands and with all its terrors, was first pressed upon the conscience of the sinner; and then the Gospel, with all its richness of mercy and sweetness of love, was presented to his heart.

The conversion once accomplished, it was not thought necessary, and it was not expected, that the repentance should ever return in its agonizing intensity, indeed, such agony would have been taken as evidence that one had lost, or lost sight of, his gracious state. The joyful emotion, however, was expected to continue, an expectation which, in the nature of things, always met with disappointment. The record of those who made daily note of the tides of feeling and of the effects of the divine breath on the soul is, in the main, a record of vain and distressing efforts to accomplish the impossible.

While the Christian world still feels called upon to maintain the assumption that conversion is necessary to salvation, and that the conversion

is supernaturally produced, it has sought relief from the difficulties of the assumption, in a reduction of the character of the experience necessary to constitute conversion; which mode of relief has been attended by a corresponding reduction in the cogency of the means employed to produce the experience. Modern evangelists do not press upon the sinner's attention the terrors of the law. No one of them would undertake to begin a revival of religion by preaching a sermon like that of Edwards on "The justice of God in the damnation of the sinner." The love of God, and not his justice, is the divine attribute now employed to produce conversion. At most, conversion is made to be an act of the will, in response to the invitations: "Come to Christ," "Give yourself to Christ," "Accept Christ," "Trust in Christ," the emotional factor being reduced to the lowest degree and even that, sometimes, of a questionable character. In some cases, the sinner is urged to come to Christ and to accept Christ, as an act of benevolence or compassion towards Christ himself, relieving him of the anguish of his long waiting for the sinner's return.

The methods of producing the small amount of emotion required are familiar. The evangelist who conducts the meeting, whether minister or layman, is almost always a stranger; there is striking novelty in his manner, appearance, mode of thought, and method; his reputation for success

in making converts has preceded him; his demeanor gives to the people the impression that he is possessed of superior consecration and heavenly-mindedness; that he is the holy man, the man of God, that he is in man's highest state—not an enthusiast, but really en-theos—and the people are affected with an admiration for him, almost with a spirit of worship, which causes them to yield themselves to his influence. Previous advertisement and preparation awaken an expectation of the divine presence and power. The evangelist has requested that all the churches before his coming unite in prayer for a blessing upon the effort, and that when he comes, all unite in the meeting. The great congregation is itself impressive, and a sympathetic glow of feeling is propagated throughout the whole body: the professional singing, the congregation acting as chorus; one part of the song being rendered in explosive tones, and the other in the softest breath notes; one part sung by the males, and the other by the females,—the latter, producing a weird effect; sometimes making the flesh tingle—the rising of Christians, at the bidding of the evangelist, to mark those who are not Christians; the bowing of the heads of the Christians, in silent prayer; then the voice of the evangelist softly breaking the solemn stillness with a tender invitation to those who desire to be Christians to rise, which, as it has been arranged

that all heads are bowed and none can see, may be done on the prompting of the slightest impulse; then the subdued emotional announcement of the evangelist, "There is one"; "there is another"; "is there not one more; yes, there is another."[1] At the close of the meeting those who have risen are requested to retire to an inquiry room for the help of "Christian workers." This being

[1] One would think that, to a right mind, it would be but little less than shocking to go into the presence of the all-seeing and heart-searching God with such a false pretence; pretending to use the sacred privilege of prayer for the only purpose intended by him who granted it, supplication for his blessing and help; and then employ it as a part of machinery, framed by man, for the production of a desired effect. It would be unjust to characterize the whole action as false pretence, for there is in it undoubtedly something of the true spirit of supplication; but, just as undoubtedly, in so far as it is used as a mechanical means of producing a certain effect, it is a false pretence.

A striking instance of the perversion came within the observation of the author. It was at the first of a series of evangelistic meetings, that were to be held in a certain large town, by Mr. D. L. Moody. The large auditorium was crowded with an expectant assembly: the ministers of all the evangelical denominations of the place were seated on the pulpit platform; the Scriptures had been read; and instantly, at the last note of the second hymn, Mr. Moody said, in a mandatory whisper, which all that were on the pulpit platform could hear: "Somebody pray." A very natural diffidence, in the presence of the great evangelist, caused a moment's delay, when Mr. Moody rushed to the pulpit, with petulance manifested in his motion and himself prayed. In such a case, one is warranted in supposing that the attention was fixed on the prayer, as a part of evangelistic machinery, and not entirely upon its efficiency in procuring, from the being addressed, the blessings desired.

done, and the question, whether they are willing to accept Christ, being answered in the affirmative, they are accepted as converted, and are received into the church of their preference.

The emotions which are supposed to constitute conversion in these cases are of a very mild character, and the ideas from which they spring are vague; and it is plain that the mechanism employed is fully adequate to the production of the whole result.

The reduction in the quantity and quality of the emotion, which are required by our modern evangelism to constitute a true conversion, is the necessary result of changes in the modes of thought which have come to prevail, of late, in the enlightened world. All the mental images we form of the divine being must, of necessity, be anthropomorphic. A century ago they were more concretely man-like than they can be now. Kant's theory of knowledge and the philosophical theories of such men as Sir William Hamilton, Dean Mansel, and Herbert Spencer, that all our knowledge of God is representative, not presentative; together with the theory of evolution as the mode of divine action in creation, has so blurred the anthropomorphic conception, as to greatly reduce the effect of the conception on the emotional nature. With the passing away of the vivid anthropomorphic conceptions of God, have passed away the vivid conceptions of the blessedness of

heaven and of the torments of hell; and it is impossible that the awakening of the sinner, and his experience in conversion, should be now what they were a century ago, excepting among the most ignorant of men.[1]

[1] When Anthropomorphism has been dispelled by the influence of modern thought there will be an ascent into the clouds of Transcendentalism, in which all things will appear like the primæval chaos, without form and void, with darkness upon the face of the deep, producing no clear impression on the mind and no strong emotion in the heart; and, as a natural consequence, all vital religion will die out in the higher ranks of men. Soon, however, men will obey the Theotropism which has been implanted in their nature and will descend to Bethlehem and Calvary, and the garden of Arimathea, where Theantropism, will furnish rational ground for faith and religious emotion. They will see, as Dr. Wilhelm Herman, Professor of Theology in the University of Marburg, does; that "God is none other than that Personal Spirit, who comes spiritually near us, in the existence in this world of the Man Jesus, and who thus compels us to think of Him as the Lord who holds in His grasp both ourselves and that infinite realm by which our life is conditioned." —*The Communion of the Christian with God*, 180 (Eng. Trans.).

CHAPTER IV

Natural Causes of Conversion

IN determining the question, whether conversion is wholly or in part, the product of a supernatural cause, we shall have to take account of the various natural causes which undoubtedly make some contribution to the result. If these causes shall be found to be adequate to the production of the whole result, the hypothesis of a supernatural cause would be excluded unless its presence should be manifested by special and indubitable signs. We shall, therefore, now proceed to the consideration of those causes.

1. **The Discontent, Dissatisfaction and Distress** which arise from the inherent physical, mental, and moral imperfection of man; and from the troubles unto which all men are born. The desire for relief from these evils is one of the strongest and most persistent of all that rise in the breast of man. To this end all his labors are directed; but he soon finds that his labor is in vain; he is compelled to recognize the fact that no human agency will ever be able to give

the relief he wants; and that, if it ever come, it must come from heaven. In the Christian world however, he will encounter serious obstacles to his turning to heaven for relief. The conception of the deity as a being of perfect holiness, which Christianity has brought into the world, instead of relieving his distress, aggravates it, extinguishing all hope and fills his heart with despair. From heaven comes the declaration: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."[1] The sad soliloquy of the sinful soul must be: "Therefore, am I troubled at his presence; and when I consider, I am afraid of him."[2] The very thought of God's presence will be a distress; and all men will shun it, as did the first sinning pair. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves, from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden."[3] Nevertheless, the theotropism, which has been implanted in the nature of man, will maintain a constant tendency to turn toward God; and this tendency will be reinforced by the belief that the God of perfect holiness is also a God of infinite goodness. This, however, will bring no relief; it will rather

[1] *Is.* lx., 1, 2. [2] *Job* xxiii., 15. [3] *Gen.* iii., 8.

aggravate the distress, by the mental schism it has created. Every man will be compelled to utter Paul's lament:

> The good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do.—I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

All who feel that wretchedness will be powerfully moved to seek relief in the goodness and mercy of the Lord; they will want to be brought into that happy state in which they can exclaim, with Paul: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, where the experience of conversion is believed to be the only way of entrance into that state, the dissatisfaction, discontent, and distress, which spring from the imperfection of the nature, and from the troubles within and without, will act powerfully, as natural causes of the experience; and will impart effectiveness to all other natural causes.

2. The Relation of the Child to the Parent. This relationship has already given to the child experiences which are the antitypes of the experience of conversion, and have prepared the way for that experience. The superior power and wisdom of his parents are recognized by the

child; their daily kindnesses impress him with a sense of their great goodness, and make him feel his obligation to obedience. Their commands and the restraints they put upon his wayward impulses; the punishments they inflict for his wrong-doings; his rebelliousness, sometimes wrought up to the highest pitch, and, after reaching its climax, breaking down into sweet submission and love, have made deep and unfading impressions on his mind. Now, when he comes to realize that he has a father in heaven, who is more powerful, loving, and kind, than his earthly father; that this father has the deepest concern for his welfare; and when he realizes that he has rebelled against that father, broken his commandments, and done despite unto his love; it would be but natural that a similar experience should occur in the new relationship. The susceptibility to the experience was implanted by the Creator in both cases to serve an important purpose, the conservation of life and also the promotion of the growth toward a perfect manhood. It is evident that the natural susceptibility and the ideas connected with the relationship are enough, in the case of the child, to produce the whole experience we have described. No potency was ever supposed to go from the father into the breast of the child as a cause of that experience. If, then, the natural susceptibility and the ideas connected with the relationship are sufficient to cause the

whole experience, in the one case, shall we not need some special reason for the belief that they have not a like sufficiency, in the other case?

3. Sympathy. The sympathetic communication of strong emotion from one to another in large assemblies is a fact too common to need either proof or illustration; and it can hardly be denied that the emotions which constitute conversion are often propagated, by this means. Individuals who are entirely isolated from their fellow men may be converted, but not many are now converted in such conditions. Since the advent of evangelism conversions do not occur in solitude; they are expected to occur only in special revival meetings, when large numbers of people are assembled, and measures are adopted to excite a common sympathetic feeling:[1]

[1] "Being in a part of the country where I was known by face to scarcely any one, and hearing that there was a *great meeting* in the neighborhood and a *good work* in progress, I determined to attend. The sermon had commenced before I arrived, and the house was so crowded that I could not approach near the pulpit, but sat down in a kind of shed connected with the main building, where I could hear and see the preacher. His sermon was really striking and impressive, and in language and method far above the common run of extempore discourses. The people were generally attentive, and, so far as I could observe, many were tenderly affected, except that, in the extreme part of the house where I sat, some old tobacco-planters kept up a continual conversation, in a low tone, about tobacco-plants, seasons, etc. When the preacher came to the application of his discourse he became exceedingly vehement and boisterous, and I could hear some sounds in the centre of the house which indicated strong emotion. At length a female voice was heard in a piercing cry

4. Obstructions to the Natural Tendency to Turn to God. We have noticed the fact that the feeling in the turning of one sex to the other may

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which thrilled through me and affected the whole audience. It was succeeded by a low murmuring sound from the middle of the house, but in a few seconds one and another rose in different parts of the house under extreme and visible agitation. Casting off bonnets and caps and raising folded hands, they shouted to the utmost extent of their voices, and, in a few seconds more, the whole audience was agitated as a forest when shaken by a mighty wind. The sympathetic wave, commencing in the centre extended to the extremities; and at length it reached our corner, and I felt the conscious effort of resistance as necessary as if I had been exposed to the violence of a storm. I saw few persons through the whole house who escaped the prevailing influence; even careless boys seemed to be arrested and to join in the general outcry. But what astonished me most of all was, that the old tobacco-planters whom I have mentioned, and who, I am persuaded, had not heard one word of the sermon, were violently agitated. Every muscle of their brawny faces appeared to be in tremulous action, and the big tears chased one another down their wrinkled cheeks.—The feelings expressed were different,—for, while some uttered the poignant cry of anguish, others shouted in accents of joy and triumph. The speaker's voice was soon silenced, and he sat down and gazed on the scene with a complacent smile. When this tumult had lasted a few minutes, another preacher, as I supposed, who sat on the pulpit steps with his handkerchief spread over his head, began to sing a soothing and yet a lively tune, and was quickly joined by some strong female voices near him; and in less than two minutes the storm was hushed and there was a great calm. I experienced the most sensible relief to my own feelings from the appropriate music, for I could not hear the words sung.—All seemed to enjoy the tranquillity which succeeded.—Indeed there is a peculiar luxury in such excitements especially when tears are shed copiously, which was the case here."—*Thoughts on Religious Experience*, by Rev. Archibald Alexander, D.D., pp. 125–126.

rise to a passionate love; and that the feeling in the turning to God may rise to an overpowering ecstasy. The exaltation of feeling in both cases is the effect of the accumulation of force that takes place when a natural tendency is obstructed.

A stream of water, obstructed in its course by a dam and apparently destitute of power, will sweep away part of the obstruction, overflow with tumultuous energy, and then flow on as it had done before.

The natural tendency of man and woman to turn toward each other is necessarily, in civilized society, obstructed in their earlier years; and when the expectation of marriage comes, the accumulated energy of the tendency expends itself in passionate love. Where woman is regarded as an inferior being, is held in subjection by man, is denied the control of her own body, and where man has only to command in order to obtain the gratification of his passion, there is no such love.

The natural tendency in man to turn to God meets an obstruction: 1. In the interpretation he puts upon the evils that befall him and upon his own moral and spiritual imperfection; taking them as evidence of God's alienation from him. 2. By the deep impression made upon him by the religious ecstasies and raptures which he may observe in particular individuals anywhere around him. Seeing that these exalted experiences are real, he can hardly help regarding them as superior

in value to his more moderate feeling. He will therefore cease to use the means by which that feeling is sustained, and will wait for the coming of the stronger feeling. 3. He is informed by a large and respectable part of the Christian world that it is only in such an experience that man can obtain any acceptance from God. And he finds that this information is based on the fact—confidently assumed to be such—that this exalted state of feeling is a supernatural work, a miracle wrought in the soul. He is told, and he believes, that his feeling will have no value until that work be wrought in him.

We have here obstruction piled upon obstruction, the last being the highest and the most difficult to surmount; and, in these obstructions, we have a full explanation of the energy of the action when they are overcome.[1]

5. Degeneration. It is to be remembered that there are conditions, in the life of all creatures, which tend to degeneration. "With regard to parasites, naturalists have long recognized what is called retrogressive metamorphosis; and parasitic animals are, as a rule, admitted to be instances of degeneration." The barnacle is given as an

[1] In marriage the passionate love soon subsides and the divine purpose of the union is thereafter accomplished by means of a milder and more enduring affection. The religious rapture is also of short duration; soon subsides; and thereafter the divine purpose in the tropism is accomplished by means of a milder and more enduring religious feeling.

example of a degenerate Nauplius; the *acarus equi*, the parasite on the skin of the horse, and the *demodex folliculorum*, found in the skin of the human face, are given as examples of degenerate spiders.[1]

There are conditions which produce degeneration in men; especially those in whom the nervous system is overtaxed, as by the noises of the city, the attrition of its crowds, and the rush of its activities. The degeneration, thus caused, or inherited, is one of the occasional causes of the religious ecstasy. Dr. Antsie says, "So much evident depression attends the phenomena of somnambulism and catalepsy, which I have now described, that it may at first surprise you when I say that hysterical ecstasy is distinctly to be reckoned as marking a lower grade of nervous degradation than they. Yet it is truly the case."[2]

Max Nordau, in speaking of mysticism says, "It follows so generally in the train of the latter (degeneration) that there is scarcely a case of degeneration in which it does not appear."[3] It cannot be maintained that conversion is a sign of degeneration and that all the converted are degenerates. But it cannot be denied that degeneration may be one of the natural contributing causes of conversion and that degenerates more

[1] *Degeneration. A Chapter in Darwinism*, by E. Ray Lancaster, pp. 17, 18, 21.

[2] Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System, *Lancet*, Jan. 11, 1873, pp. 40–41.

[3] *Degeneration*, p. 45.

readily obtain the experience than persons whose constitutional tendency is in the upward direction.

6. Expectant Attention and Dominant or Fixed Ideas. Dr. Carpenter says:

The influence of this state of "expectant attention" upon the organic functions of the body, being fully admitted among scientific physiologists, there can be no difficulty in making the further admission, that the peculiar *concentration* of the attention which can be obtained in the hypnotic state, should produce still more striking results.

Expectant attention to any particular object, too frequently indulged in, will result in a fixed idea, which will dominate the mental operations, resisting all voluntary efforts to change it; and will be attended by remarkable mental and physical phenomena.

The effects which expectant attention and fixed ideas may produce on both body and mind are exhibited in the following:

Louise Lateau was born at Bois d'Haine, a small village in Belgium, Jan. 30, 1850, was reared in the utmost poverty, was chlorotic, loved solitude and silence, and when not engaged in work—and she does not appear to have labored much—she spent her time in meditation and prayer. She was subject to paroxysms of ecstasy, during which she spoke very edifying things of charity, poverty, and the priesthood, St. Roch, St. Theresa, and the Holy Virgin. On a certain Friday, she bled from the left side of her chest; on the following Friday, this flow was renewed,

and in addition, blood escaped from the dorsal surfaces of both feet; and on the third Friday, not only did she bleed from side and feet, but also from the dorsal and palmar surfaces of both hands. Every succeeding Friday the blood flowed from these places. At first these bleedings took place at night, but after two or three months they occurred in the day time, and were accompanied by paroxysms of ecstasy, during which she was insensible to all external impressions, and acted the passion of Jesus and the crucifixion. M. Warlomont, commissioned by the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium to examine her case, says in the report of his first visit:

"It is a quarter past six. 'Here comes the communion,' said M. Niels (a priest), 'kneel down.' Louise fell on her knees on the floor, closed her eyes, and crossed her hands, on which the communion cloth was extended. A priest, followed by several acolytes, entered; the penitent put out her tongue, received the holy wafer, and then remained immovable in the attitude of prayer.—Her immobility was that of a statue, her eyes were closed; on raising the eyelids the pupils were seen to be largely dilated, immovable, and apparently insensible to light. Strong pressure, made upon the parts in the vicinity of the stigmata, caused no sensation of pain, although a few moments before they were exquisitely tender. Pricking the skin gave no evidence of the slightest sensibility. A limb, on being raised, offered no resistance, and sank slowly back to its former position. Anæsthesia was complete, unless the cornea remained still impressionable. The pulse had fallen from 120 to 100 pulsations. At a given moment I raised one of the eyelids, and M.

Verriest quickly touched the cornea. Louise at once seemed to recover herself from a sound sleep, arose and walked to a chair, upon which she seated herself. 'This time,' I said, 'We have awakened her.' 'No,' said M. Neils, looking at his watch, 'it was time for her to awake.' She remained conscious; the blood still continued to flow; the anæsthesia had ceased, her pulse rose to 120, and at the end of half an hour she was herself. An apparatus was constructed and applied to Louise's hand and arm so as to prevent any external excitation of the hemorrhage. It was apparently shown that there was no such interference, for the blood began to flow at the usual time on Friday." The conclusions, arrived at by M. Warlomont, were that the stigmatizations and ecstasies of Louise Lateau were real, and to be explained upon well known physiological and pathological principles.[1]

The natural effects of expectant attention and the fixed idea appeared in the dancing mania which prevailed in Europe for two centuries in the Middle Ages. The persons affected formed circles, hand in hand, and appearing to have lost all control over their senses, continued dancing regardless of bystanders, for hours together, in wild delirium, until at length they fell to the ground in a state of exhaustion. While dancing they neither saw nor heard, being insensible to external impressions through the senses, but were

[1] *Nervous Derangement*, William A. Hammond, M.D., 175–181.

haunted by visions; their fancies conjuring up spirits, whose names they shrieked out. Some of them asserted afterward that they felt as if they had been immersed in a stream of blood, which obliged them to leap so high; others, during the paroxysm, saw the heavens opened, and the Saviour enthroned with the Virgin Mary.

Dr. J. F. C. Hecker, in his history of the *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, says that the dancing mania

did not remain confined to particular localities, but was propagated by the sight of the sufferers, like a demoniacal epidemic, over the whole of Germany and the neighboring countries to the northwest. In 1374, it appeared in Aix-la-Chapelle, propagated by persons who came out from Germany. . . . Most of those affected were only annually visited by the attacks; and the occasion of them was so manifestly referable to the prevailing notions of that period that, if the unqualified belief in the supernatural agency of saints could have been abolished, they would not have any return of the complaint. Throughout the whole of June, prior to the festival of St. John, patients felt a disquietude and restlessness which they were unable to overcome. They were dejected, timid, anxious, wandered about in an unsettled state, being tormented with twitching pains, which seized them suddenly in different parts, and eagerly expected the eve of St. John's day in the confident hope that by dancing at the altars of this saint or St. Vitus, they would be freed from all their sufferings. This hope was not

disappointed; and they remained, the rest of the year, exempt from any further attack.

In the year 1727, Francis of Paris, a zealous Jansenist, died and was buried in the cemetery of St. Medard, in a suburb of Paris. He was regarded as very holy by the Jansenists on account of his extreme asceticism, and his tomb was devoutly visited by many of his followers. In September, 1731, a rumor was spread that miracles had been wrought at his tomb, and multitudes resorted to it for the healing of their diseases. Many were seized with convulsions, threw themselves into the most violent contortions of the body, rolled on the ground, imitated birds, beasts, and fishes, and at last, when completely exhausted, fell into a swoon. Sometimes the patients bounded from the ground, like fish when out of water; and this became so frequent that the women and girls, not wishing to appear indecent, put on gowns made like sacks, closed at the feet, when they expected the convulsions to come on. The female sex especially was distinguished by all kinds of leaping, and almost inconceivable contortions of the body; some spun around on their feet with incredible rapidity; others curved their bodies so that their heels touched their shoulders. Similar experiences, attended with similar phenomena, have been produced by impressions which have not been at all religous in character; for example:

Tarantism, an ecstatic experience which, beginning in Apulia in the latter part of the fourteenth century, spread as an epidemic to the other provinces of Italy, and appeared at various times throughout two or three centuries, reaching its greatest height in

the seventeenth century. It was supposed to have been produced by the bite of the tarantula. Those who were bitten generally fell into a state of melancholia, and appeared to be stupefied, and scarcely in their senses. This condition was, in many cases, united with so great a sensibility to music, that at the very first tones of their favorite melodies, they sprang up, shouting for joy, and danced on without intermission, until they sank to the ground exhausted and almost lifeless. In others the disease did not take this cheerful turn. They wept constantly, and as if pining away with some unsatisfied desire, spent their days in the greatest misery and anxiety. Others again, in morbid fits of love, cast their longing looks on women, and instances of death are recorded, which are said to have occurred under a paroxysm of laughing or weeping.

The Tigretier, a similar epidemic of ecstasy, attended with similar physical effects, took its name from Tigre, a province of Abyssinia, in which it took its rise and from which it spread to other provinces.

In both of these affections, the ecstasy, unlike the religious ecstasy, was dreaded, not desired; in both music was employed, but to allay, not to increase the violence of the paroxysm; in both cases, women were more readily and more generally affected than men.[1]

6. The Reproductive Impulse. Christian people will be reluctant to admit that there is any connection between the sexual and religious

[1] *The Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages*, J. F. C. Hecker, M.D., Chapter II.

feelings—such a connection that the one may become a natural cause of the other. It can be plainly seen, however, that these two feelings were intended by the Creator to be the principal means of accomplishing his one great purpose for the world—the development of the perfect man. The one feeling was intended to contribute to that end by variation and the survival of the best, which contribution would depend upon multiplication; the other, by obtaining the aid which has been offered by God himself in his scheme for the redemption of the world. The two feelings in man are, therefore, like two pools of water in a basin, with a low barrier between them; at a low stage they are separate, but if the water in either be raised above the barrier it will overflow into the other, until both form but one pool without a perceptible division between them.

Psychologists regard the sexual feeling as a general feeling, like that of hunger or thirst. These feelings are general, in that they extend beyond the organs in which they have their origin; often pervading the whole system. It seems reasonable, at first, to refer hunger to the stomach as its organ; but there is no doubt that hunger is a feeling of the whole organism. It is not the stomach alone that wants food, but the whole body. These general feelings act upon all the particular feelings increasing their strength. A general feeling is to all special feelings as the sun-

light is to the various pieces of stained glass in the cathedral window: each piece may have its peculiar tint, but the sunlight brightens the tints of them all. Such a feeling is co-enesthesia, the feeling of well-being, which is experienced when all the tissues of the body are in a healthy condition and all the organs are perfectly performing their functions; it adds strength to every other pleasurable feeling and makes it a joy to live. One peculiarity of this reinforcement of special feelings by a general feeling is, that there is no consciousness of it, or of the source from which it comes. The general feeling, now under consideration, may, therefore, enter unconsciously into the whole life.

In the *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. ix., p. 3, a writer, eminent in the science, says, "It is certain that very much of what is best in religion, art, and life, owes its charm to the progressively widening irradiation of sexual feeling."

The near relationship of the two kinds of feeling appears very plainly in the history of the heathen religions, both ancient and modern.

Siva, the third god of the ancient Hindu triad, is called the progenitor of heaven and earth, and the rites of his worship are connected with the marriage ceremony, in which he is asked to lead the bride to the bridegroom and make her prosperous. The symbol of Siva is the *linga*, (the phallus), an emblem of the male generative power

of nature, with the counterpart, *yoni*, or the symbol of the female nature, as fructified and productive. The manner, in which the *linga* is represented, is said to be generally inoffensive; it is the pistil of a flower, a pillar of stone, or other erect and cylindrical object; but the worship, though originally ideal and mystical, very early degenerated into the grossest sensuality.

Baal, the son-god of the Syrians, Phœnicians, and heathen Hebrews, was conceived of as the male principle of reproduction in nature. Sensual indulgence became a sacred rite in his worship; and the first sacrifice the youthful female was required to make in his temple was that of her virtue. An example of this fact may be found in the worship of Baal-peor (*Num.* xxv.,) and in the Canaanitish high places, where Baal, the male principle, was worshipped in association with the unchaste goddess Ashera, the female principle of nature.

In the ancient Egyptian mythology Osiris, represented the male, and Isis the female principle in nature. Osiris introduced civilization into Egypt, and then wandered over the world, making men acquainted with agriculture and the arts. On his return, Typhon, in order to capture and destroy him, had a beautiful covered chest made, which exactly fitted Osiris; and at an entertainment, offered to give it to any one who could lie down in it. As soon as Osiris made the trial,

Typhon had the box nailed shut, and threw it into the Tanaite branch of the Nile. Isis wandered mournfully in search of the body, as Demeter had sought for Persephone. At last she found the chest; but while she was away, Typhon discovered it, mangled the body of Osiris, and scattered the fragments abroad. When Isis found a part of the body, she buried it. There was one part she did not find. Of that she made and consecrated a model: hence—says the myth—came the phallus to be an object of worship in Egypt.

In Italy the name given to Dionysus was Bacchus; and there men were admitted to participate in the worship. In the Bacchanalia, according to Livy, the initiated indulged, not only in feasting and drinking, but when they were heated with wine, indulged in the coarsest expressions and the most unnatural vices; all modesty was set aside, and every vice found its full satisfaction. In the course of time, all manner of crimes were found springing from the licentiousness. In the consulship of Spurius Postumius Albinus and Q. Marius Phillipus, 186 B.C., the senate authorized the consuls to issue a proclamation forbidding any one to be initiated into the Bacchic mysteries, or to meet with others for the purpose of celebrating them. While the Bacchanalia were thus suppressed, another simpler festival, the Liberalia (Liber, being one of the names of Bacchus), continued to be celebrated

at Rome annually on the sixteenth of March. The festival was celebrated, at first, with innocent symbolic rites, with merriment and various amusements; but St. Augustine thus described the character of the celebration in his day 390 or 400 A.D.

Now as to the rites of Liber, whom they have set over liquid seeds and, therefore, not only over the liquors of fruits, among which wine holds so to speak, the primacy, but also over seeds of animals. As to these rites, I am unwilling to show to what excess of turpitude they have reached, because that would entail a lengthened discourse, though I am not unwilling to do so, as a demonstration of the proud stupidity of those who practise them. Among other rites which I am compelled to omit, Varro says that in Italy, at the places where the roads cross each other, the rites of Liber were celebrated with such unrestrained turpitude, that the private parts of a man were worshipped in his honor. Nor was this abomination transacted in secret, that some regard, at least, might be paid to modesty, but was openly and wantonly displayed. For during the festival of Liber, this obscene member, placed on a car, was carried with great honor, first over the cross roads in the country, and then to the city. But in Lavinicum, a whole month was devoted to Liber alone, during the days of which the whole people gave themselves up to the most dissolute conversation, until that member had been carried through the Forum and brought to rest in its own place: on which unseemly

member it was necessary that the most honorable matron should place a wreath, in the presence of all the people.

Thus, forsooth, was the god Liber appeased in order to the growth of seeds: thus was an enchantment to be driven away from the fields; even by a matron's being compelled to do in public what not even a harlot ought to be permitted to do in a theatre, if there were matrons among the spectators.[1]

In the Thesmophoric festivals, which celebrated the carrying away of Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, to the lower world by Pluto, women, who alone were allowed to participate, made cakes of sesame and honey, in the shape of the *pudenda muliebria*, and handed them around to be eaten; and made sacred cakes in the shape of serpents and phalli, to be thrown into the cavern through which Persephone was supposed to have been carried into the lower world, in symbolization of the productivity of the earth and man.

It may be said that the theological doctrines of the heathen justified and sanctified the sensual excitement that arose in connection with the close natural relationship between the two classes of feeling, and are themselves evidences of that relationship.

Now let us take into consideration the fact that the theological and ethical doctrines of Christian-

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, Book vii., Chap. 21.

ity were very decidedly opposed to any mingling of the reproductive impulses with the religious feelings. If, then, those impulses be found in connection with the ecstasies of the Christian, it will be a confirmation of the hypothesis that the former may contribute to the exaltation of the latter. *The Beghards and Beguines, or the Brethren and Sisters of Free Spirit*, a fraternity of Christian people, the origin of which is obscure, was found throughout Italy, France, and Germany in the thirteenth century. They held that all things flowed from God, by emanation, and were finally to return to their divine source; that rational souls were so many portions of the supreme Deity; that by long and assiduous meditation they obtained a most glorious and sublime liberty, and were freed from the obligation of all laws, human and divine. They asserted that the propensities and passions which arise in the soul of the divine man, after his union with deity, are the propensities and affections of God himself, and are therefore holy. To many men and women this was, no doubt, a pure and elevating speculation, but it led them, at last, to practise the most scandalous impurity. They held secret assemblies at night, stark naked, and lay in the same beds with spiritual sisters, or indiscriminately with other women, without the smallest scruple or hesitation.

The Flagellants. Flagellation, as a voluntary

penance, was practised in the church at an early day, but did not become prevalent till the end of the eleventh century. In the thirteenth century fraternities were formed for the purpose of practising flagellation as a public religious observance. Multitudes of persons, of both sexes and of all ranks and ages, ran through the streets of the cities and in the highways of the country with whips in their hands, lashing their naked bodies, drawing the blood, as with sighs and tears they sang penitential psalms, and cried to God for mercy. Roving bands propagated the enthusiasm throughout southern and western Europe.

The effects of the flagellation and of the ecstatic excitement on the conduct of the flagellants became, at last, so scandalous, that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were constrained to suppress the fraternities, and forbid the practice. It is known that the superficial irritation in certain parts, produced by flagellation, will excite the neighboring organs. It is used for this purpose by persons of a cold temperament, and by those who have been exhausted by excesses. For these effects of flagellation, and the statement that they led to the prohibition of the observance, Dr. Krafft-Ebing shall be our authority. He says:—

The following facts, from the lives of the two heroines of flagellation, Maria Magdalena of Pazzi and

Elizabeth of Genton, clearly show the significance of flagellation as a sexual excitement. The former, the child of distinguished parents, was a Carmelite nun in Florence (about 1580), and, by flagellation, and still more through the results of it, became quite celebrated, and is mentioned in the Annals. It was her greatest delight to have the prioress bind her hands behind her and have herself whipped on the naked loins in the presence of the assembled sisters.

But the whippings, continued from her earliest youth, quite destroyed her nervous system, and perhaps no other heroine of flagellation had so many hallucinations ("Entzückungen"). While being whipped her thoughts were of love. The inner fire threatened to consume her, and she frequently cried, "Enough: Fan no longer the flame that consumes me. This is not the death I long for; it comes with all too much pleasure and delight." Thus it continued. But the spirit of impurity wove the most sensual, lascivious fancies, and she was several times near losing her chastity.

It was the same with Elizabeth Genton. As a result of whipping she actually passed into a state of bacchanalian madness. As a rule, when, excited by unusual flagellation, she believed herself united with her "ideal." This condition was so exquisitely pleasant to her that she would frequently cry out, "O love, O eternal love, O love, O you creatures, cry out with me, love, love."

These sects were at first favored by the Church; but, since sensuality was only excited the more by flagellation, and as the fact became more and more

apparent in unpleasant occurrences, the Church was finally compelled to oppose it.[1]

Marie de l' Incarnation. Marie Guyard, who was born at Tours in France, Oct. 18, 1599, was married, at the desire of her parents, in her eighteenth year. Her marriage proved to be an unhappy one, but without fault on either side, it is said. At the end of two years her husband died, leaving her with an infant son. She gave the child to the charge of her sister, and abandoned herself to solitude and meditation. Love for her child withheld her, for a long time, from becoming a nun; but at last, fortified by her confessor, she left the child to his fate, took the vows, and immured herself with the Ursulines of Tours, under the name of Marie de l'Incarnation. In a dream she beheld a lady, who taking her hand led her on a journey toward the sea. They soon met one of the apostles, clothed all in white who, with a wave of the hand directed them on their way. They now entered a scene of surpassing magnificence; but the two travellers, without stopping to admire, moved swiftly on, till they beheld the Virgin, seated with her infant son, on a small temple of white marble, which served her as a throne. She seemed about fifteen years old, and was of a "ravishing beauty." Her head was turned aside; she was gazing on a wild waste of

[1] *Psychopathia Sexualia*, p. 29.

mountains and valleys, half concealed in mist. Marie approached, with outstretched arms, adoring. The vision bent toward her and smiling, kissed her three times; whereupon, the dreamer awoke in a rapture. She told the vision to Father Dinet, a Jesuit of Tours, who was at no loss for an interpretation. The land of mist and mountains was Canada, and thither the Virgin called her. Marie de la Peltrie, who, after reading the *Revelations* of Lejeune, had resolved to build a house, in honor of St. Joseph in Canada, and give her life and wealth to the instruction of Indian girls, happening to visit the convent at Tours, was recognized, on the instant, by Marie de l'Incarnation as the lady of her vision. On the fourth of May, 1639, Madame de la Peltrie, Marie de l'Incarnation, Marie de St. Bernard, and another Ursuline, embarked at Dieppe for Canada. They arrived at Quebec on the fifteenth of July, fell prostrate, and kissed the sacred soil of Canada. A massive convent of stone was built at Sillery, four miles above Quebec, and there Marie de l' Incarnation and her nuns instructed the Indian children in the truths of salvation.

Dreams, visions, interior voices, ecstasies, revulsions, periods of rapture, and periods of deep dejection, made up the agitated tissues of the life of Marie de l'Incarnation. She fasted, wore hair cloth, and scourged herself. She heard, in a trance, a miraculous voice, the voice of Christ

promising to become her spouse. Months and years passed, full of troubled hopes and fears; when the voice sounded again in her ear, with the assurance that the promise was fulfilled, and that she was indeed his bride. Now ensued phenomena which are not infrequent among Roman Catholic devotees, when unmarried or married unhappily, and which have their sources in the necessities of a woman's nature. To her excited thought her divine spouse became a living presence; and her language to him, as recorded by herself, is that of the most intense passion.

O my love, when shall I embrace you. Have you no pity on me, in the torments that I suffer? Alas! Alas! my Love, my Beauty, my Life! instead of healing my pain, you take pleasure in it. Come, let me embrace you, and die in your sacred arms.— Then, as I was spent with fatigue, I was forced to say, "My divine Love, since you wish me to live, I pray you let me rest a little, that I may the better serve you"; and I promised him that, afterward, I would suffer myself to consume in his chaste and divine embrace. Clearly here [says Mr. Parkman] is a case for the physiologist as well as the theologian; and the "holy widow," as her biographers call her, becomes an example, and a lamentable one, of the tendency of the erotic principle to ally itself with high religious excitement.

As the years went on, her rapturous visions ceased, or became less frequent. Becoming supe-

rior of the convent, she was racked with anxieties and burdened with cares. There were dissensions to be healed, money to be provided, and a vast correspondence to be carried on, which caused her to fall into a condition, described by her biographers, as a "deprivation of all spiritual consolation," and she herself speaks of her life as a succession of crosses and humiliations; but she displayed, throughout it all, an ability and fortitude that commanded respect and admiration. The religious enthusiast became one of the most energetic and practical of women in the management of affairs. The change occurred after she had passed her fortieth year, and, no doubt, after the fountain of life within her had ceased to overflow, with its natural feeings, into the streams of religious emotion.[1]

The Sect of Christs in Russia. This sect believes that every person contains, or may contain, a portion of the divinity, and is worthy of adoration. It is amid dancing and sobbing, they believe, that the Holy Spirit descends. A wild and giddy dance begins at midnight, after long hours of prayers and psalm singing, and religious discussion; then the Christs arise. Both men and women remove all their garments and put on long white shirts and white cotton stockings; candles are lighted and, after singing a monoton-

[1] *The Jesuits in North America*, Francis Parkman, pp. 174–186.

ous chant, a few begin to leap and dance. Gradually others join, and they beat time with their feet, the men in the direction of the sun, and the women in the opposite direction. Their movements increase in rapidity, and their sobs become more violent. Each Christ begins to revolve, the men to the right and the women to the left, with such rapidity that the faces cannot be distinguished. They leap, they contort themselves, they run after one another, and they flagellate one another. In the midst of mad laughter, of cries and sobs, loud shouts are heard, "It is coming! It is coming! The Holy Spirit is coming!" Then the excitement of this strange dance macabre, of these shouting, half-naked, white garmented figures, begins to culminate. Men and women tear off their garments, go about on all fours, ride on one another's backs, and give way to sexual erethism, which had been exalted to the highest point. At their religious ceremonies, some strong, beautiful, and intelligent young woman is often chosen for special adoration as the personification of divinity, and the emblem of generative force. They call her the Virgin Mary, and they identify her with the earth-goddess. She is their priestess, and they prostrate themselves before her. Among the Skoptsy, a sect related to the Christs, the same observances and the same worship of woman are carried to a still higher point. They sometimes worship a

naked young girl, cover her with kisses, and when she has reached the necessary pitch of exaltation, she allows them to communicate in her blood.[1]

Dr. Antsie has said:

I know of no fact in pathology, more striking and more terrifying, than the way in which the phenomena of the ecstatic state, which have often been recognized by sentimental theorists, as proofs of spiritual exaltation, may be seen to bridge the gulf between the fooleries of ordinary hysteric patients and the degraded and repulsive phenomena of nymphomania and satyriasis.[2]

Revivalists are accustomed to urge upon the unconverted young immediate decision, for the reason that very few are converted after the age of forty, the implication being that God withdraws his renewing action from the soul as a penalty for the long continued resistance to the solicitations of his Spirit. They do not mistake the fact upon which their warning is based; but they fail to take account of the large contribution which the physical and mental conditions of youth, from the twelfth to the twentieth year of their age, make to the result. Several psychologists have lately been making an effort to get a correct estimate of the amount of this contribution. Their method

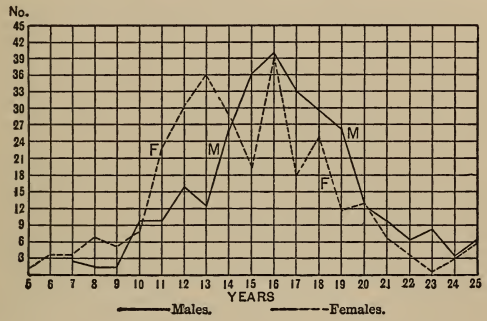
[1] *Man and Woman*, Havelock Ellis, pp. 290–291.

[2] Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System, *Lancet*, Jan. 1873.

has been to send out questions to a large number of converted persons, asking their age at conversion and the circumstances of their conversion. One has ascertained that out of 253 conversions, 135 occurred before the age of 20; 85 between the ages of 20 and 30; 4 between 40 and 50; and 1 between 60 and 70. Another found that in 110 cases reported, the average age of conversion was —for boys, 15.4 years; for girls, 14.6 years. It was ascertained, from the reports of 526 officers of the Young Men's Christian Association of the United States and the British Provinces, that the average age at conversion was 16.4 years. It appears that not one of the conversions, of which we have given account in the Appendix, occurred after middle life. Prof. Starbuck, of the Leland Stanford, Jr., University, ascertained from 1265 answers to his questions (524 being from females and 1011 from males, 776 of the males being alumni of the Drew Theological Seminary) that conversions began at 7 or 8 years of age, increased gradually up to 10 or 11, then increased rapidly up to 16, after which there was rapid decrease to the 22 year. He has given a summary of his results in the following diagrammatic representation.

He calls attention to the fact that there are three peaks in the male line; one at 12 years of age, with 16 conversions (the proportion starting with

unity); another at 16, with 40 conversions; and the third at 19, with 26 conversions. There are also three peaks in the female line; one at 13 years, with 35 conversions; another at 16, with 39 conversions; and another at 18, with 25 conversions. In discussing the reason of the facts thus appearing he says: "It has long been recognized that the beginning of adolescence is a period



of rapid physiological transformation. The voice changes, the beard sprouts, the proportions of the head are altered, that of the arteries decreases, the blood-pressure is heightened, and, central among the changes, are those in the reproductive system, which make the child into the man or woman. The amount of carbonic acid in the breath is greatly increased, showing the increment in the processes which tear down and build up the

system. Both boys and girls increase faster in height and weight than at any other period of life.[1]

Professor Coe, of Northwestern University, found from the reports of 84 men that the average age at conversion was 15.4 years, which he says is only 0.3 of a year below Starbuck's average, and within 1 year of the highest average reached in any group yet reported. He found the average age of the conversion of 272 members of the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be 16.4 years; and that the largest number were converted at 16. Only thirteen per cent. were converted under 12, and only sixteen per cent. after 20.

Exhibiting in one table the results reached by examining all these different groups, we have the following very striking statistics.

AGE OF CONVERSION OR DECISIVE AWAKENING OF 1764 MEN

	Cases Examined	Average Age
Graduates of Drew Seminary	776	16.4
Y. M. C. A. Officers	526	16.5
Starbuck's Conversion Cases	51	15.7
Starbuck's Cases of Spontaneous Awakening	75	16.3
Members of Rock River Conference	272	16.4
My Own Cases of Decisive Awakening	84	15.4
Total	1784	16.4

[1] *The Psychology of Religion*, by Edwin Diller Starbuck, Ph.D. pp. 37–38.

If now, this average age of greatest religious awakening be compared with the age of accession to puberty, the conclusion will be sufficiently convincing that the mental unturning that accompanies the physical transformation is peculiarly favorable to a life decision in the matter of religion.

Upon the obtaining a second experience, Professor Coe says:

I made a definite inquiry on this point. The result is a group of 51 men who experienced what is variously styled by them sanctification, perfect sanctification, etc., this term in every case signifying a more or less definite experience succeeding conversion or the decisive awakening.

These experiences are distributed as follows:

Age	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Second Experience	2	0	0	0	4	4	11	14	4	5	2	2	1	1	0	1

The curve which might be drawn to represent these proportions would give a premonition of itself at 13 (the first period of adolescent awakening), start in at 17 (the second period), reach a decided maximum at 20 (the third period), and then rapidly fall away.

All of this goes to show that religious tendencies are a most important feature of general adolescent development. When the approaching change first heralds itself the religious consciousness also tends to awaken. Again, when the bodily life is in most rapid transition the religious instincts likewise come into a new and greater life. Finally, when the fermentation of youth begins to settle into the calmness of

maturity, once more religion makes its claim to be counted in the life.[1]

It is a striking fact that the average age of conversion is 16.4 years for males; and 14.8 for females: and that the average age of puberty is 15.6 years for males, and 13.8 for females, the difference being 0.8 of a year in the one case, and 1 year in the other. This, together with the almost exact difference between the average age of conversion and that of puberty in the two cases, 1.6 years in the one case, and 1.8 years in the other is almost conclusive evidence of a causal connection between the two events.

Psychologists are now generally agreed in recognizing this connection. The agreement is too wide-spread on the continent of Europe, in Britain, and America, to be attributed to a sinister desire to attach an unpleasant association to the subject of experimental religion. The discovery of that connection does not effect a reduction in our estimate of the value of religious emotion, any more than the discovery that the stem of the water lily is slimy and that its roots are in the ooze reduces our sense of the sweetness and beauty of the flower. To the physiological botanist the slime on the stem and the ooze at its roots are no

[1] *Spiritual Life. Studies in the Science of Religion*, by George A. Coe, Ph.D. John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy in Northwestern University, pp. 41–46.

less interesting in their cellular structure than that of the petals, and do not manifest less clearly the Creator's wisdom and goodness.[1]

[1] Psychologists are maintaining that the causal influence of this feeling is general.

Prof. Starbuck says that one of his students, in an unpublished research, has found that the recognition of the rights of others by children has a sudden increment at about the age of puberty. He quotes Dr. E. H. Lindley as having ascertained that the puzzle interest of children culminates sharply at 12 and declines rapidly after that; also Mrs. Mary Sheldon Barnes, as having ascertained that the ability of boys to make proper inferences from a historical incident increases rapidly at 12, falls at 13, and rises again at 14; also, a research by two of his students, in which it was ascertained that the ability of children to make an abstract of a picture, after having seen it for a short interval, shows a definite improvement at 12, a falling off at 13, and a still greater improvement at 14. The three curves for conversion, proper inference and abstract interpretation, and graphical representation, are nearly parallel from 11 to 15 years of age.

Prof. Arthur H. Daniels says: "The ethical perceptions are intensified, no doubt, by the influence of the reproductive organs. As Clouston says, 'The powers and instincts that make for the continuance of the race, strengthen every other power and faculty at that period of life (adolescence).' The sense of seriousness and responsibility of life is first aroused by them. The sense of right and wrong, good and evil, is by them kindled into strength enough to guide the conduct. Shame, modesty, chivalry, self-denial, tenderness, and a host of other virtues and essential social graces are founded in them. The highest moral qualities, the keenest yearnings after the good, the intensest hatred and scorn of evil, are not to be found in a-sexual men and women."—*American Journal of Psychology*, vi., 86.

CHAPTER V

The Psychology of Emotion

1. The Nature and Purpose of Emotion. Emotion is a pleasurable or painful feeling which attends all the experiences of animate creatures, and incites to all their actions.

All emotions are teleological: serving a purpose in the economy of life, not one being an end in itself. No one will try to maintain that a painful emotion is an end in itself, and no one can maintain that a pleasurable one is such an end.

The two primary ends to which emotion is made to serve as means are: 1. the preservation and elevation of the individual, 2. the perpetuation and elevation of the race. Prof. Alexander Bain's statement of the one end is: "States of pleasure are connected with an increase; and states of pain, with an abatement, of some or all of the vital functions."[1]

Ribot's statement is: "The sentient being, man or animal, is a bundle of needs, of appetites,

[1] *Senses and Intellect*, p. 281.

of physical and psychic tendencies; everything that suppresses that, is translated into pain. Everything that facilitates or promotes it is translated into pleasure."[1]

2. The Source of Emotion. It is generally accepted as a fact, that "no mental modification ever occurs that is not accompanied or followed by a bodily change."[2]

The question has been raised, whether the emotion causes the excitation of the bodily mechanism; or whether the bodily mechanism, being first excited, produces the emotion. Psychologists, since they have begun to seek their facts, not from introspection alone, but in the field of experimental investigation, have been constrained to adopt the latter hypothesis. Prof. James, of Harvard University, was the first to announce the fact. He says:

> The general causes of emotion are indubitably physiological . . . Our natural way of thinking is, that the mental perception of some facts excite the mental affections, called emotion; and that this latter state of mind gives rise to bodily expression. My theory, on the contrary, is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the existing fact, and that the feeling of the same changes, as they occur, is the emotion.
>
> Every one of the bodily changes, whatever it be,

[1] *The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 47.

[2] *Principles of Psychology*, by William James, i., 5.

is felt, acutely or obscurely, the moment it occurs. . . If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract, from our consciousness of it, all the feelings of its bodily symptoms, we find that we have nothing left behind, no "mind stuff," out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains. . . A purely disembodied emotion is a nonentity.[1]

Prof. C. Lange, of Copenhagen, a little after the publication of Prof. James's theory, announced the following as his conclusion, the result of a study entirely independent of that of Prof. James:

It is to the vaso-motor organism that we owe the whole emotional side of our soul-life, our joys and sorrows, our happy and our unhappy hours. If the impressions that strike our senses had not the strength to set that system into action, we should wander through life disinterested and painless; the impressions from the outer world would enrich our experience and increase our knowledge, but they would wake in us neither joy nor anger; and could not move us either to grief or to fear.

Let us therefore get rid of that useless hypothesis of a psychic enity called emotion, supposed to be intercalated between the perception or idea, and the physiological occurrences. Reversing the order, admitted by common-sense, we say: first, an intellectual state, the organic and motor disturbances, and then

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, ii., 449–452.

the consciousness of these disturbances, which is the psychic state we call emotion. . . . As usually stated, the order is this: intellectual state, affective state, organic states. According to the physiological hypotheses, the order is as follows: intellectual state, organic states, affective state. A disembodied emotion is a non-existent one.[1]

It is conceivable, that if the head could be removed from the body at will, the brain could perform a mathematical calculation. It is no longer possible to believe that it could feel anger or love, or any other emotion, save in the most remote and intellectualized form.[2]

By experiment on the lower animals it has been shown that all the manifestations of emotion may be called forth in the absence of the cerebral hemispheres, the organs of consciousness.

Among the evidences that emotion has its origin in the bodily condition may be mentioned: 1. The effect of what is called co-enesthesia, that high tone of general unlocalized feeling, which is enjoyed when the body is in perfect health; the source of the sense of enjoyment in activity manifested in the uneconomical expenditure of force, the running, leaping, climbing, and throwing, by youth; and the frisking of young animals. 2. The effects of wine, opium, and hashish on the

[1] *The Psychology of the Emotions*, Th. Ribot, pp. 107.
[2] *Man and Woman*, Havelock Ellis, p. 298.

emotions; an effect which comes solely from their action on the tissues and organs of the body. 3. The effect on the emotions of morbid bodily conditions, such as derangements of the stomach, liver, and brain. 4. The fact that those actions and postures of the body which are the natural expressions of emotion, if purposely accomplished in the absence of emotion, will excite emotion. Dancing is the expression of exhilaration, but it will also cause exhilaration. To sit for any length of time in a melancholy posture will cause a depression of the spirits. By being in cheerful society, and acting as it does, one becomes cheerful. If the arm of a hypnotized person be placed in a threatening attitude with clenched fists, he will have the emotion of anger; if in an attitude of loving embrace, he will have the emotion of love; if in the attitude of prayer, he will have devout emotions. 5. The fact that an emotion cannot be recalled in the memory. The sensation, the perception, the conception, the idea, in connection with which the emotion first occurred, may be recalled, and that will produce the bodily modification, which will reproduce the emotion. At the revival of the idea, Prof. James says: "Quick as flash, the reflex currents pass down through the preordained channels, alter the condition of muscle, skin, and viscus; and these alterations perceived, like the original object, combine with it in consciousness and transform it, from an

object simply apprehended, into an object emotionally felt."[1]

Now, if this be the natural order, it follows that the presentation of religious truth and the conception of its relation to the personal interest, present and future, will, by a natural process, produce religious emotion, the intensity of which will vary with the force of the presentation, the vividness of the conception, and the impressiveness of the circumstances. But that religious emotion which is produced by natural causes is not regarded as "gracious," the kind of emotion that attends the mental acts which make a man a Christian. It is supposed that the emotion which is effective to this end must be miraculous, produced by direct divine action on the soul.

If this supposition be accepted, the question remains: Where does the miraculous agency break into the natural order? For what part of the natural process does it become a substitute? It may be supposed to come in at any one of the various stages of the natural order. 1. It may produce the emotion by an immediate creation of it, in connection with naturally occurring ideas, without exciting any of those bodily disturbances which ordinarily cause the emotion. 2. It may miraculously excite the disturbance in the physical apparatus, which, transmitted by the natural process to the nervous centres, would

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, ii., 474.

be the emotion. 3. It may miraculously produce the idea or conception, which would, by the natural process, cause the disturbance in the physical apparatus, which, being transmitted by natural process to the nervous centre, would become the emotion. No one believes that the idea from which the religious emotion springs is miraculously given. It is received from the Bible or other religious book, from a tract, from an address in public, or from the suggestion of a friend in private. The miracle, therefore, if it occur, must be either a disturbance of the physical apparatus or an immediate production of the emotion. In either case the divine action would be beyond the reach of human observation. Moreover, a single miraculous interposition at any one of the stages of the process, would not be sufficient to produce the supposed result of conversion, a permanent change of character. The production of such a change would require a repetition of the miracle at every moment in the life; but conversion is held to be a momentary change, not a continuous miracle. Change of character, if consequent upon a miracle, is consequent upon regeneration, a work which, according to our Lord's statement, unlike conversion, takes place no man knows when or how.

Character is determined by the perceptions and conceptions, and by the order they take; by the course of thought, and the order of succession in

that course. The thoughts, unless interrupted by miracle, follow one another in a chain of natural connection, as irrefragible as the chain of cause and effect in the material world. We have no power ourselves to break that chain. We can modify its movements only by a selective attention to particular links in it. Now it is just as conceivable that God, in his immanence, could exert such a modifying influence upon that chain, swaying it, without breaking it, as that we ourselves can do so, and thus, by a real divine agency, change the character of the man. But that would be a providential, not a miraculous agency, and would not be within the cognizance of the subject.

CHAPTER VI

Changes in Character and Life from Natural Causes

WE shall have to admit that, in many cases, the experience of conversion is followed by a change in conduct, and an apparent change in character: we cannot, however, accept the change as, itself, evidence of its supernatural origin, since similar changes have been brought about by known natural causes. Morbid physical conditions have produced the most remarkable changes in character. A young man, Louis V——, had led an irregular life, in the army, in hospitals, and in houses of correction: at the age of eighteen, at an agricultural house of correction, he was bitten by a viper, which brought on a convulsive crisis and left both legs paralyzed for three years. While in this condition, he was gentle, moral, and industrious. Suddenly, after a long convulsive seizure, his paralysis disappeared, and with it, all memory of the time it had endured and his character also changed. In the one state, he was gentle, polite, silent, sober, and of almost child-

like timidity; in the other, talkative, arrogant, violent, brutal, insubordinate, a thief, and ready to kill any one who gave him an order. When paralyzed on the right side, his character was intolerable: when the paralysis was transferred to the left side, his character was reversed.[1]

Mary Reynolds, a dull and melancholy young woman, dwelling in the wilderness of Pennsylvania in 1811, was found one morning, long after her habitual time of rising, in a profound sleep, from which it was impossible to arouse her. After eighteen or twenty hours of sleeping she awakened, but in an unnatural state of consciousness: memory had fled; she could pronounce but a few words, and they seemed not to be connected with any ideas in her mind. Her parents, her brothers and sisters, were not recognized; the house, the fields, the forest, the hills, the vales, and streams were all strange to her. She had to be taught again to read and write. One of the noteworthy phenomena in her case was the change in her character. Before, she was melancholy, and now cheerful; before, reserved, taciturn, retiring, now buoyant, social, merry, and jocose. Enamored with the forests, hills, vales, and streams, she would start in the morning, either on foot or on horseback, and ramble over the country till night-fall, choosing mostly the tractless forest.

[1] M. M. Bourru and Burot, cited by Profs. James and Ribot.

She was without fear. One evening, on her return, she said:

"As I was riding to-day along a narrow path, a great black hog came out of the woods and stopped before me. I never saw such an impudent hog before. It stood up on its hind feet and grinned and gnashed its teeth at me. I could not make the horse go on. I told him that he was a fool to be frightened at a hog; and I tried to whip him past, but he would not go, and tried to turn back. I told the hog to get out of the way, but he did not mind me. 'Well,' said I, 'if you won't for words, I 'll try blows.' So I got off and took a stick and walked toward it. When I got close by, it got down on all fours and walked slowly and sullenly, stopping every few steps and looking back and grinning and growling. Then I got on my horse and rode on."

She continued in this condition for five weeks, when one morning after a protracted sleep, she awoke and was herself again. The memory of her previous life returned, and the interval between her first and last long sleep was a blank. Her new character disappeared and the old one returned. In a few weeks, the abnormal condition returned and gave place to the normal condition. These alternations from one state to another continued, at intervals of varying length, for fifteen or sixteen years, and finally ceased, when she had attained the age of thirty-five or thirty-six. But her second state was the one that became permanent. In this she remained, without change, for the last twenty-five years of her life. Several of those years were spent in teaching school, in which

occupation she was a general favorite with old and young. [1]

Ribot, speaking of this and similar cases, says: "Here the connection between the affective disposition and the somatic state is quite clear, and seems to be referable to trophoneurosis of the brain." [2]

Bourru and Burot, speaking of the case of Louis V——, say: "The law of these changes is quite clear. There exists a precise, constant, and necessary relation between the bodily and the mental state, such that it is impossible to modify the one without modifying the other in parallel fashion."

There have been, however, sudden and great changes in character and life in persons who were not affected with any morbid or abnormal condition of the body. Mr. Harold Begbie has written a book entitled *Twice-born Men*, in which he narrates the conversion of nine of the worst characters in the slums of London. They were persons who from their childhood up had never been subject to any religious influence: they were

[1] Dr. Weir Mitchell, *Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, April 4, 1888. Cited by Prof. James, *Psychology*, i., 381. The history of her case was communicated to Dr. Mitchell by the Rev. Dr. John V. Reynolds, of Meadsville, Pa., her nephew, with whom she lived during the last twenty-five years of her life, part of that time as his housekeeper, showing a sound judgment and a thorough knowledge of the duties of her position.

[2] *Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 451.

drunkards, vicious, criminal. The conversions all occurred suddenly, while the subject was kneeling at the penitent form at a meeting in a hall of the Salvation Army. Nothing of the thought or feeling of the penitent, while kneeling, nor of the time spent at the form, is given; but the change that took place in those moments was great and permanent. The person who has been "consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, becomes consciously right, superior, and happy." The greatness, the permanence of the change, and the suddenness of its occurrence are taken as decisive evidence of its miraculous character. There are facts, however, which show that this conclusion does not follow of necessity from the facts alleged.

Diogenes was in his youth a spendthrift and a rake, probably of so bad a reputation that Antisthenes, the philosopher of Athens, rejected again and again his application to become a pupil. Yet he became the most noted character of antiquity for his contempt of the splendors and pleasures of the world.

The Roman Emperor, Diocletian, the cruel persecutor of the Christians, after twenty-one years of imperial reign and warlike enterprise, abdicated the throne, retired to his native province Dalmatia, and for eight years devoted himself to philosophic meditation and horticultural pursuits. An ideal which had been held long in

abeyance was brought into active power by the failure of some of his cherished governmental projects and produced a marked conversion.

St. Francis of Assisi (1226) was a gay and dissolute spendthrift for twenty-five years of his life; he engaged eagerly in the exercises of chivalry and arms; and was generous as well as prodigal. In one of the feuds of the time, he was taken prisoner and was held in captivity a year at Perugia. During his captivity, he was taken with an illness, which turned his thoughts from earth to heaven, but without any marked results. He returned to his former military pursuits, and was again taken with an illness, which threatened his life; and after this illness he became a new man. He devoted himself to poverty, which he called his bride. He made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter at Rome, and there offered to God all that he possessed on earth. He appropriated not only his own wealth to the sacred cause, but that which belonged to his father; and, to escape his father's anger, he took refuge in a cave and spent a month in solitary prayer. He formally renounced his inheritance, saying that, till now he had been the son of Bernardini, but that henceforth he would have but one father, him that is in heaven. He begged at the gates of monasteries; performed the most menial offices; served the lepers in the hospital at Gubbio with the most tender assiduity; threw aside his wallet,

his staff, and his shoes, and arrayed himself in a single tunic of coarse woollen cloth girt with hempen cord. Two years before he died (September 17, 1224), while he was at prayer at Monte Averno, an ecstasy came upon him, in which Christ on the cross appeared to him in a vision, and so overwhelmed him that the bleeding wounds of his Lord appeared in his own side, his hands, and his feet.

Raymond Sulli (1233–1315) at first led a dissolute life but, in the midst of it, a revelation by one of his mistresses caused a sudden and complete change in the course of his life. He withdrew into solitude, where he experienced the highest religious ecstasies. The whole of his after life was spent in labors and sufferings for the cause of Christ, and he died a martyr to his zeal for the conversion of the Mohammedans, being stoned to death by the inhabitants of Rugia in Northern Africa.

In any rational explanation of the changes, we must take account of the fact that in all men there is what Prof. William James calls a divided personality, a condition which the apostle Paul describes when he says that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other."[1] "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do

[1] *Gal.* v., 17.

that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."[1] Prof. James says:

It makes a great difference to a man whether one set of his ideas or another be the centre of his energy; and it is a great difference, as regards any set of ideas which he may possess, whether they become central or remain peripheral in him. To say that a man is "converted" means, in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims now form the habitual centre of his energy.

The sudden and explosive ways in which love, jealousy, guilt, fear, remorse, or anger can seize upon one are known to everybody. Hope, happiness, security, resolve, emotions characteristic of conversion, can be equally explosive. And emotions that come in this explosive way seldom leave things as they found them."[2]

It is to be observed that nothing is said here about the cause of the transfer. From all that is said it may be inferred that the transfer, in both cases, is supposed to be a purely natural occurrence.

In the cases narrated by Mr. Begbie the universal discontent of mankind, which causes them to desire to be in some higher state of feeling than

[1] *Rom.* vii., 19, 20.

[2] The Varieties of Religious Experience. *The Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh*, 1902, by William James, LL.D., pp. 196–198.

in the one which ordinarily prevails, will also act as a natural cause of the change.

The permanence of the change in these cases may be accounted for by the natural effect of the influence that comes from the new environment. In nearly all cases, a year after conversion nothing can be discovered in the character which may not be so accounted for. Anywhere may be seen the effect of environment upon the conduct, and apparently, upon the character of men. A boor, deserving to maintain a place in refined society, may be a model of politeness; a libertine, in association with the virtuous, may be a model of propriety in his conduct.

Furthermore, there seems to be a correlation and transformation of emotions: hysterical crying may be followed by laughter; the rebelliousness of the child, risen to the highest pitch, may be followed by sweet submission. A young man who, when resisted in his assault upon a young woman in a solitary place, cut her throat and threw her body into an adjoining corn-field, said, some time before he was hung for the crime, that when he found himself successfully resisted, his sexual passion entirely left him and a murderous passion took possession of him.

It may be said also that it is hardly in accord with the mode of dispensing the divine favors to suppose that the great multitude of Christian

people, who never went to excess in vice and crime, who all their lives gave equal energy to the gratification of the spirit and of the flesh, should be left without any of the sensible and perceptible evidence of their having been twice-born that are given in conversion.

CHAPTER VII

Prophecy and Pentecost

THE phenomena of insanity, catalepsy, and the trance have always been well known; but very few have known the natural causes by which they are to be explained. To the common mind they are mysterious; and, to such a mind, the border-land of mystery is the habitation of supernatural beings; and there has been a general inclination to attribute these phenomena to the agency of such beings.

The phenomena of hypnotism are now equally well known, and are equally mysterious. It is certainly known that the mind of the subject, while in the hypnotic trance, is under the control of the mind of the operator; but whether it be partly by a direct mental energy exerted by him or entirely by the suggestions he makes, is not yet ascertained.[1]

[1] "You can make the subject think that he is freezing or burning, itching, or covered with dirt, or wet; you can make him eat a raw potato for a peach, or drink a cup of vinegar for a glass of champagne; ammonia will smell to him like cologne water; a chair will be a lion, a broom-stick a beautiful woman, a noise in the street will be an orchestral music, etc., etc."—*The Principles of Psychology*, William James, ii., 604.

It is only in late years that there has been any scientific study of hypnotism; and, heretofore, the mind of the subject of every trance has been supposed to be in possession of a superior spirit or of some deity. This, and not the mere prediction of future events is the distinctive characteristic of the prophetic state; and there have always been prophets in the world, as there have always been susceptible persons who occasionally fell into the state of trance. No age, or nation, or race, has been without its oracles, seers, soothsayers, fakirs, dervishes, shamans, and medicine men. As a general fact, Moses probably excepted (*Ex.* xxxiii., 11, *Deut.* xxxiv., 10), the prophets among the Hebrews spoke in a state of trance; but, in several important particulars, they were distinguished from all other prophets. They claimed that they spoke in the name of the one living and true God; they never spoke in the name of any other god, nor in the name of an angel or an archangel; and their claim was attested by many plain and indisputable facts. They wrought miracles and foretold events which were so near in the future that there would be immediate confirmation or contradiction of the prediction; as when Samuel said to Saul, "It shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets, coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and

they shall prophesy: and the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them:" signs which came to pass the same day that Saul turned his back to go from Samuel.[1] They taught, and exemplified in their lives, the strictest morality and the purest religion. They never used the power, which people always concede to those whom they regard as divinely inspired, for their own aggrandizement: they sought no religious or political office; ardently patriotic, they essayed to rule the people and to command the army only in great emergencies; and they left no successors in authority. They espoused the cause of the poor and oppressed against the rich and powerful: they were almost always in opposition, resisting the passions of a stiff-necked and rebellious people; they boldly rebuked and denounced the kings for their iniquities. The one ruling purpose, in them all, was to keep their nation from disintegration and dispersion in order that the sceptre might not depart from Judah; nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come.

It is to be remarked that the prophetic state was much more rare among the Hebrews than it was among other peoples; only the great patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob appear in the early history as prophets; during the seven hundred years B.C. only sixteen appeared whose writ-

[1] 1 *Sam.* x., 5–9.

ings are preserved. Moses was at first the only prophet in all Israel: it was an extreme necessity which brought an extension of the gift to others; and then it was confined to the seventy elders of the people.[1] It appears that pretention to the prophetic state was not encouraged by credulity, but was regarded with suspicion and was restricted by regulation. When Eldad and Medad, who had not gone with the other elders to the tabernacle to receive the gift, were found prophesying in the camp, Joshua complained to Moses of the irregularity. (For the severe punitive sanctions under which the Hebrew prophet was required to speak, see p. 51.) There is no account of a prophet having appeared in Israel for nearly four hundred years B.C.

We have to notice the fact, however, that Moses, in his reply to Joshua, implies that, in his view, the people would be in a more blessed condition if they were all prophets. "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets; and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." We may infer from this statement that Moses regarded such a condition as possible; but it is remarkable that, while foretelling the coming of the great prophet saying, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken,"[2]

[1] *Num.* xi., 14–17. [2] *Deut.* xviii., 15.

he said nothing of a time when all of the Lord's people should be prophets. Two of the prophets, however, speak of that time as yet to come. Jeremiah, speaking in the name of the Lord, of the new covenant which was to be made with the houses of Israel and Judah, says, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."[1] Joel says, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."[2] An inspired authority tells us that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost; but it was a partial and very meagre fulfilment. Not all of the Lord's people, but only a little band of disciples, received the outpouring of the Spirit on that day. And there are facts which show, beyond all question, that the prophecy was fulfilled on that day only as a token of a general fulfilment which was to take place at some future era of the world's history.

1. There was an unmistakable decline in the prophetic gift of the day of Pentecost: on that day, each of the apostles possessed all the pro-

[1] *Jer.* xxxi., 34. [2] *Joel* ii., 28–29.

phetic gifts; but afterwards there was a distribution of the gifts. "To one was given the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; to another, faith; to another, the gift of healing; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues."[1]

2. There was not only a distribution but there was also a deterioration. The gifts came to be so exercised as to cause confusion in the church and to contribute no longer to edification.

How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church. . . . Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one.[2]

The infirmities of human nature began to appear in the exercise of the various gifts. The more impressive and showy gifts were especially desired, and those who possessed them counted themselves as superior to those who had only the

[1] 1 *Cor.* xii., 8–10. [2] 1 *Cor.* xiv., 26–31.

gifts of a more subdued and less conspicuous character. Those who had the gift of knowledge were puffed up; "knowledge puffeth up." The evil had gone so far in the church of Corinth as to call for correction by the apostle Paul; even so far as to cause division and schism in the church.

The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body.[1]

3. It is remarkable that there is in the history so little mention of the appearance of the pentecostal gifts elsewhere in the church than in Corinth. At Ephesus the disciples were ignorant of the gift; and "had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." When Paul laid his hands on them, we are told that "they began to speak with tongues and prophesied," but that is the only recorded instance of their appearance in the church of that city.[2] At Tyre there were disciples "who said to Paul, through the Spirit,

[1] 1 *Cor.* xii., 21–25. [2] *Acts* xix., 2–6.

that he should not go up to Jerusalem."[1] At Cæsarea, Philip the evangelist "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."[2] There Agabus took Paul's girdle and, while performing a symbolic act, "said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."[3] No mention is made of the appearance of the gift at Antioch; it is only said that prophets came from Jerusalem unto Antioch, and that "there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar."[4] At the close of Peter's address to the company assembled at the house of Cornelius in Cæsarea, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word"; and "they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."[5] In this case it appears that the Jewish believers were so far from expecting the pentecostal outpouring to come upon all believers that they "were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that, on the Gentiles also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."[6]

4. The pentecostal gifts were not only not bestowed on all the people; not only was there distribution in the bestowal of them and deteriora-

[1] *Acts* xxi., 4. [2] *Ibid.*, 9. [3] *Ibid.*, 11.
[4] *Ibid.*, xi., 27–28. [5] *Ibid.*, x., 44–46. [6] *Ibid.*, 45.

tion in their character; but false prophets were to arise who could hardly be distinguished from the true. Their appearance had been foretold by our Lord. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."[1] They did arise, and were so plausible in their pretention, that the apostle John was constrained to warn the church against them. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."[2]

5. The apostle Paul declares that the pentecostal gifts were inferior in spiritual value to at least three of the ordinary gifts of the Spirit. "Covet earnestly the best gifts: . . . Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal: and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I had all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." His Lord before him had expressed just such an estimate of these gifts. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me, in that day,

[1] *Matt.* xxiv., 24. [2] 1 *John* iv., 1.

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."[1] Jesus, who was the example of the perfect man, never spoke in trance or in the ecstatic state, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Moses.[2]

6. Paul declared that the pentecostal gifts shall cease. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."[3] It is the general opinion of church-historians that the pentecostal gifts did all cease at an early date; that none of them appeared, at the latest, after the third century.[4]

7. The apostle Paul speaks of a period in a divine dispensation, yet to come, in which at least the gift of perfect knowledge shall be bestowed on man. He distinguishes the present period from that by the particles "now" and "then." What the two periods are, and when the second is to come, may be ascertained from the difference between the two which he specifies. He says that it is to be a difference like that between childhood and manhood. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I

[1] *Matt.* vii., 21–23. [2] *Deut.* xviii., 15. [3] 1 *Cor.* xiii., 8.
[4] *History of the Apostolic Church*, Philip Schaff, p. 471.

put away childish things." "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part, but then, shall I know even as also I am known." Evidently, this great change is to take place in the future life, not in this life. "And *now* [in the present dispensation] *abideth* [not to cease and vanish away, as the pentecostal gifts of tongues and knowledge have done] faith, hope, and charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity."[1] These quiet graces that come unaccompanied by any miraculous manifestations are to be the treasures of the church, witnessing to the ascended Lord as the giver of the Holy Spirit. The beginning of the heavenly life, when the gifts of faith, hope, and charity shall be supplemented by the addition of all the gifts that appeared on the day of Pentecost, the apostle John saw in his vision.

And I saw a new earth and a new heaven: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his

[1] 1 *Cor.* xiii., 8–13.

people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.[1]

The day of Pentecost has never been repeated in this world; and it will not be repeated until the time of which Paul and John have spoken shall come. Then the prophecy of Joel will be fulfilled, not in token but in the fact that the spirit of the Lord shall be upon all his people alike. To assume that a religious revival—even the most exciting—all the phenomena of which are explicable by the operation of natural causes, is an outpouring of the Spirit, like that which took place on the day of Pentecost, is to depreciate one of the most important and significant events in the history of the church. To assume that any revival of religion is such a repetition is to be blind to the clearest statements of revelation; it is to heedlessly impose on one's self an illusion which a moment's thought would dispel.

[1] *Rev.* xxi., 1–4.

CHAPTER VIII

The Test of Experiment

IN the scientific world a hypothesis is not accepted unless it be able to bear all the appropriate tests of experiment; and, if the hypothesis underlying the doctrine of conversion be true, it will be able to bear such tests. It cannot, therefore, be deemed improper to subject it to at least one experimental test. The hypothesis is that conversion is a change in which the lost sinner obtains salvation, a change in which the child of Satan becomes a child of God, in which one has put off the old man with his deeds and has put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. As a test, let an enlightened heathen, of sound mind, accustomed to careful observation and to the exercise of calm and impartial judgment, go through a Christian community, not knowing anything of the church relations or of the religious sentiments of the people, and make two lists, one of which shall contain the names of all the converted, and the other the names of all the un-

converted, determined in the classification solely by what he observes in their character and conduct. This being done after sufficient time for observation, is it probable that the one list will contain the names of all the converted and the other the names of all the unconverted in that community? Would the converted be willing to agree beforehand to regard all who should happen to be on the one list with himself as the children of God; and himself with all others on the other list, as the children of Satan? Would not the result require an abandonment of the hypothesis?

CHAPTER IX

Conclusion and Deductions

WITH all the facts before us, as they have appeared in this investigation, we are unable to maintain any fidelity to truth and come to any other conclusion than that conversion is an effect produced by natural causes, and is not, either in whole or in part, the product of direct supernatural agency, is not a miracle in the soul.[1]

[1] That the conversion of the apostle Paul was miraculous is too plainly recorded to be denied; but the occasion which made the miracle necessary appears with equal plainness on the record. That man of mighty intellect and irresistible energy was bringing upon the kingdom of Christ on earth a crisis, in which, if left to the operation of natural causes, its destruction would have been certain. There is no record of any other such conversion and the church has never since that time been brought into a crisis which would make such a conversion necessary for its preservation: not even in the time of Constantine the Great. The general opinion now is that the luminous cross which Constantine saw before him in the heavens, while on the march against Maxentius in the year 313, which he took to be miraculous, and which is said to have caused his conversion to Christianity, was a natural occurrence—a sun-halo which took the form of a cross. Such a halo was observed at Brighton, Eng., on April 1, 1852, forming a perfect cross and lasting half an hour. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th Edition, xi., 399.

It may be said that the conclusion we have reached amounts to a denial of all divine agency in religious experience. Such a deduction is very far from being legitimate; on the contrary, our conclusion leads to a truer and larger conception of that agency. We believe that the emotion in religious experience is the product of a divine action, that the Holy Spirit does comfort believers, does bring to their remembrance whatever things the Lord has said unto them, does sanctify them through the truth, does enable them to know the things that are spiritually discerned, does witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, and is in them a spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba, Father"; but we believe that action to be providential, not miraculous, the kind of action that is now accomplishing all the purposes of God in the outer world, doing "according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" without once interrupting natural causes in their operation. An illustration borrowed from Dr. Bushnell's work on the *Natural and the Supernatural*, may help us in conceiving the possibility of such action. A brook falling over a precipice may be a continuous stream, yet the movement of the atmosphere, through which it falls, may, without breaking its continuity, cause it to sway to this side or that, and thus determine its whole subsequent course. So natural causes operating in the

inner world may be a continuous stream, and the immanent God may, without breaking its continuity, sway it in such a way as to accomplish his gracious purposes therein. We believe that miracles are always possible in the outer world—that the lawgiver may suspend the operation of his laws whenever he will—but given only as proofs to men that God is the author of nature, so that they may always see God in nature. This being the purpose, miracles will cease, of course, when the proof given is sufficient for the faith of mankind. There is nothing more precious to the devout mind than the belief that the Father in heaven, who notices the fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs of our head, has an agency in all the affairs of our every-day life.

We believe that, as in Christ the heart is brought more and more into harmony with the will of God, we shall see more and more clearly his hand in the articulations of these affairs, and find cause therein for rejoicing and thankfulness in prosperity and for cheerful submission in adversity. Is it not true, however, that many Christian people regard the inner world as lying entirely outside of the domain of the providence of God; that no divine action therein is recognized but that which comes with observation and is attended with those sensible manifestations which are taken to be the signs of a miraculous work? Do they not believe that their Lord is failing to fulfil

unto them the promises he gave to his disciples: "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth"? "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Is it not true that many believers are suffering the loss of assurance and comfort which, but for this unbelief, might be a perpetual possession?

There is, moreover, some reason to believe that there may be, in this imperceptible divine action, a revelation of truth that was not known before. When the apostle Peter, replying to the question of Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am," answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said to him, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." From this it appears that Peter had been in possession of a truth which he had received by revelation from God, and yet that he did not know the time when, nor the place where, it had been revealed to him, or indeed that it had been revealed to him at all.

Part IV

Practical Consequences of the Doctrine of Conversion

CHAPTER I

Evils Attending Conversion

WHAT our Lord said of men is true also of their doctrines. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? . . . a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them."[1] So far, therefore, as the doctrine of conversion is erroneous it may be expected to be productive of various evils. No laborious search will be needed to find these evils, for they are many and conspicuous.

I. It has Modified and Narrowed the Commission given to the Church. The commission, given by our Lord to the church, was, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples [pupils, learners] of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," which many persons have now altered so as to be: Go and make conversions in all nations, holding that, unless

[1] *Matt.* vii., 16–20.

conversion be first, baptizing and teaching will be entirely without effect in making disciples; it will be like calling on the dead to arise, be baptized, and observe the commandments of the Lord.

II. It is a Cause of Unbelief. Thoughtful and sober-minded men of the world observe that experiences of the most exalted character are ascribed to direct divine agency, while the evidences of such an agency are sometimes sadly wanting in the character and conduct. They observe that some men, who have had ecstatic, rapturous, transporting conversions, are unkind in their homes, churlish as neighbors, unscrupulous in business, and sometimes lustful. They apprehend clearly the assumption that conversion works a change in the nature of its subject, a change far greater than specific, no less than generic, putting the man in a new kingdom indeed, transforming the child of Satan into a child of God. They are not slow in applying to the assumption a variety of simple practical tests. They say that if the assumption be true, all the good ought to be found on one side of the line which divides the converted from the unconverted and all the bad on the other side; whereas, the patent fact is that on the one side not one is wholly good and on the other side not one is wholly bad. They see also that, from the best on the one side, to the worst on the other, there is a shading of differences which obliterates any

line of demarcation that may be drawn. They say, furthermore, that it does not seem reasonable to suppose that there would be an arrest of miraculous power at the experience, which prevents its going over into the character and life; especially, as a change in the character and life is the alleged final aim of the whole work. It may be that the philosophical, historical, and scientific attacks on our religion have caused some men to turn away from it; but it is probable that the repelling influence of this discrepancy, between the alleged miraculous experience and the life, has made hundreds of doubters where the noisy attacks of the unbeliever have made one.

The effect of this discrepancy is not to be measured by the silence of the doubters, or by the infrequency of the utterance of their doubts, for the grounds of their doubt lie in the lives of their nearest neighbors and most intimate friends.

III. It Leads to a Forbidden Judgment. It furnishes the converted with an ostensible ground for a judgment of their fellow-men which is incompatible with a proper sensibility and a true humility. The judgment is not held in silence; it is often uttered. The alleged consequences of conversion are of such momentous importance that every consideration of benevolence will constrain the converted to utter it. It is uttered in the private solicitations and the public addresses of the converted to the unconverted. The judgment

pronounced is awful in its import and dreadful in its consequences. They count themselves as saved, the unconverted as unsaved. They separate their fellow-men, "one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," setting "his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." They assume that they themselves shall receive from the king the address of welcome: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; and that the unconverted, unless they become converted, shall receive the sentence: "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Who but God, the omniscient and unerring, is qualified to pronounce such a judgment? "He is the judge of all the earth." Christ said, "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world." His command was, "Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." One would think that the least remnant of true humility or of a proper sensibility, even without this positive command of his Lord, would forbid any man to put forth, even by implication, a judgment so transcendently blessed in its issues to himself, so unspeakably dreadful to his fellow-men.

IV. It Puts a Strain upon the Pure Motives of the Ministry. In the days of our Lord, it was

one of the distinguishing marks of the kingdom of heaven that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them": "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Happily, in our day, the rich also have the gospel preached unto them; and many of the mighty and noble are called; and unhappily, there is, in the church, a more or less well defined segregation of the two classes. There are congregations in which there may be one or two of the rich among a large number of the poor; and there are congregations in which there may be a few poor among a large number of the rich. The one class of congregations is generally found in the rural districts; the other in the cities. The life of the minister who serves the one kind of congregation is very different from that of the minister who serves the other. The former's mode of living will be but little above that of the majority of his parishioners; his home will have but few more comforts, conveniences, and adornments than theirs. In addition to the work that properly pertains to his office, he will have to do many things that belong to the work of the common laborer. He will need to keep a cow, for the contribution she makes to the sustenance of his family; and horses, for his visits to his parishioners, and to reach the widely separated places of his regular preaching. He will have to milk and feed his cow; feed and groom his horses; and remove the accumulation in his stable: all this, in all

kinds of weather, and often in repulsive circumstances. His drives will have to be taken in cold and storm, and often through the deepest of muddy roads. It may be that he will have to borrow a wagon to haul his own wood, or go to the distant mine for coal, starting at five o'clock in the morning, taking provender for his horses and lunch for himself, and returning late at night to find his wife weary with anxious waiting to hear the ring of the wagon wheels on the snow-covered and frozen ground. His attire must be suited to his work; it will be plain, coarse, and often greatly soiled: to be otherwise attired in doing such work would be as foolish at it would be for the blacksmith to work at his forge in full dress suit and kid gloves. With small and widely scattered congregations and widely scattered members, the number of conversions will be small. No matter that, under his ministry, the unbeliever has become a believer, that the enemy of Christ has been converted into a friend; no matter that the spiritual tone of his whole congregation, old and young, communicants and non-communicants, has been elevated; no matter that his wise and sympathetic ministrations to his people, through all their joys and sorrows, have made his life to theirs like the woof to the warp on the loom—that is not the ministerial success which is in demand. A shallow and ignorant man who has gone from the country to the city and there

become a member of a large and wealthy church, inflated by the change, and now his guest, does not hesitate to intimate to him, in the baldest manner, that he is entirely too insignificant ever to be thought of as a possible pastor for the vacant city church. When he meets his brethren of the city, there may be on their part not the slightest intention to impress upon him his inferiority, yet there will be an air of superiority in their bearing, the pungency of which he cannot help but feel. His wife must be the first lady of the parish; but unable to keep female help, she will have to be housekeeper, cook, and washer-woman: her husband, in compassion, helping her in all her work, and she repaying his help with her assistance in the roughest of his outdoor work. The associations of his wife and children must be with people who, though kind and good—none anywhere to be found more kind and good—are uneducated and unrefined. With his meagre salary, he will not be able to give his children that education which he and his wife have had, and the value of which is now so deeply impressed upon them by the destitution of it which they see around them; and all the time his heart will be burdened with the thought of the condition his family would be in if he should be taken from them by death.

It is far otherwise with the minister who serves the wealthy congregation of the city. His salary

is ample for all his present need; his home is but little inferior to that of his wealthy parishioners in all its appointments and adornments; he has the best opportunities for intellectual and literary cultivation, for the enlargement of intelligence, and the gratification of refined tastes. The associations of himself and family are with the educated and cultured; he is able to give his children the very best advantages for education. He has summer vacations which are spent at the seaside or at mountain resorts in the most delightful companionship. On the approach of his vacation, a wealthy member of his congregation suggests that he go abroad, and hands him a check for an amount large enough to pay all his expenses. Others vie with one another in giving him valuable and elegant presents. He is the recipient of flattering attentions from all quarters of the church. His kind and thoughtful people provide for him a life insurance large enough to relieve him of all anxiety for his family in case of his death.

Now it would be preposterous to say that the rural pastor would not greatly prefer the lot of the city pastor; but he cannot make the change on his own motion; it can be made only on invitation. The considerations, which determine a congregation in its choice of a minister, may be his learning, his intellectual power, his eloquence, his strength of character, and purity of life; but where the common notion of conversion prevails,

the determining consideration ought to be, and is, his success in making conversions. When such a people are seeking for a minister, they examine the statistical tables of the church, which give every year the number of conversions for each minister, and they choose the one who has had the largest number of conversions.[1]

This fact operates on all ministers as an incentive to report the largest number of conversions. A minister who, by indiscretion or weakness, has become uncomfortable in his present charge, and one who for any other reason desires a more eligible situation, will hold a series of revival meetings;

[1] Within the knowledge of the author, a worthy young minister, who happened to have a large number of conversions in his first charge, was called to a city church, the determining consideration being, avowedly, the large accessions accredited to him in the statistical tables of the church. Great expectations of ingathering by his ministry were entertained; he was held in the highest esteem, both as a man and a minister, but not in the least beyond his desert; he was most fondly petted and extravagantly praised; but it happened that his earnest and faithful labors were not attended with the kind of success that was expected; and he was made to feel, in the most painful manner, the disappointment of his congregation. He was officially requested to resign his pastoral charge, the request being delivered to him by an officer of the church with whom he had taken sweet counsel, and in whom he had confided as one of his most devoted friends. He resigned, but his fine sensibility and firm integrity forbade him to adopt the schemes commonly used by ministers who are compelled to seek a new pastoral charge. A chaplaincy in the army was secured for him, but a broken heart and broken health soon brought him to the grave.

and, in order to be more sure of success, a distinguished evangelist will be employed to conduct the meetings; conversions of the mildest type will be accepted as genuine; the roll of the church will be examined; and persons who had been once converted, but had lapsed into indifference and neglect of religious duty, will be brought back to the church and will be reported as new converts; the religious press will be employed to publish the number of accessions thus gained—all this for the purpose of raising the value of his stock in the ministerial market, thus making the professed winning of souls a veritable traffic in souls. Where the common doctrine of conversion prevails, and while human nature is beset with its present infirmities, this humiliating spectacle may be expected to appear.

V. It Shuts Out from the Church Many who may be True Children of God. It is conceded by all that the work of regeneration is wrought in many who have not had, and could not have, the experience of conversion. The larger part of the Christian world applies the sign of "the washing of regeneration" to the infant children of believers; some, on the assumption that the regeneration is wrought by means of, or in connection with, the ordinance of baptism; others, on the assumption that it had already taken place. The former hold that all unbaptized infants dying in infancy, whether they be the

children of believers or unbelievers, are unregenerate and lost. Some of the latter have held, in times past, that the children of believers are included in the covenant and that, if they die in infancy, they are saved, whether baptized or unbaptized; while the children of all others dying in infancy are lost. Now, however, all, excepting members of the church of Rome, believe that all infants dying in infancy, whether the children of believers or unbelievers, are regenerated and saved. In all of these cases, it is admitted that there is regeneration and salvation without conversion. Then it may happen, and surely will happen, that those who hold the doctrine that conversion is necessary to salvation will be found counting the regenerate as unregenerate; treating true children of God as children of Satan; rejecting those whom Christ has received; and offending little ones who believe in Christ.

VI. It Declares the Secret Things that Belong to God. It Assumes to Answer the Question: Who are Regenerate? Who may account himself as the recipient of the change which makes him a member of the kingdom of heaven? Regeneration, as described by our Lord, is like a birth, an event of which no one can be conscious: it is like the movement of the wind, of which no man can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Relying on this authority, our answer to this question ought

to be: every one, in whose mind the question is raised; and at the moment the question is raised. At that very moment he may begin to take in the gracious influences of the Spirit, as the infant inhales the atmosphere the moment it enters into the world. The action of the mind in the one case, and of the body in the other proceeds from a power and a predisposition bestowed by the Creator. The Scriptures furnish ample warrant for the belief that the divine provision for the life of the soul is no less abundant, and no less immediately available, than the provision for the life of the body.

The faith of man should be immediate; there should be no waiting for a sign or wonder to be wrought within him for its confirmation; and he should set out at once upon the course of conduct properly consequent upon such faith. The fact that the love of God is so conspicuous among his other attributes as to appear to be his essential nature; the fact that "God is love"; the fact that while he declares himself to be a just God who "will by no means clear the guilty" he, at the same time, declares himself to be "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin" warrants this answer. Every one who will may use the prayer beginning with the words: "Our Father which art in heaven":

every one may express his confidence and hope in the words of the Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . ."; every one may express his gratitude in the words of the Psalm: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name." Will any one forbid the use of these words to all but those who have had the experience of conversion? Will any one forbid the unconverted to regard their adversities as the chastening of a father, who dealeth with them as with sons, chastening them that they may be partakers of the divine glory? Will any one forbid all but the converted to undertake the fulfilment of Christian duties, as such? This prohibition, though never expressed by the converted, is always implied in their doctrine of conversion.

Whether it is to be attributed to that selfishness which is an element of the original sin, consequent upon the fall of man; or whether it is a survival of the *ferocia* of some ancestral wild beast, there can be no doubt that it contributes to the enjoyment of any good thing man possesses to see or know that there are others who are shut out from the enjoyment. We often find, therefore, barriers erected by men around the things they enjoy merely for the sake of this increment to their enjoyment. There can be no doubt that the extirpation of this peculiarity of human nature will be in the line of development yet to be made. No one, we

think, can read the Gospel histories without seeing that this was a work which our Lord set himself specially to do while he was on the earth. In at least two instances he manifested his purpose to remove the barriers erected by men for the purpose of separating themselves, as saved, from others whom they counted as unsaved: 1. When he said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," speaking of Zaccheus the publican who was barred out of the ark of safety and counted among the lost. 2. When he said to the woman of Samaria: "Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall, neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." The Samaritans had held that a formal connection with the temple on Mt. Gerizim, and the Jews had held that a like connection with the temple at Jerusalem, was necessary for the acceptable worship of God; and in doing so had made these temples to be bars, shutting out all others from the divine acceptance. Jesus would break down the bars and accept any one, anywhere in the world, who was sincere in his worship; as a worshipper of the Father, in spirit and in truth; and there was an implication in his words, that the search of the Father, for such worshippers would not be in vain. The same evil

tendency is in man to-day, and such barriers are now to be found in the church, some making a connection with a certain ecclesiastical organization necessary to salvation and counting all who are outside of that organization as lost. Others make a certain kind of experience necessary to salvation and count all who have not had that experience as lost. Is it not probable that our Lord, if he were now on earth, would break down these barriers and declare genuine religious feeling, even the mildest, and however manifested, to be enough for acceptance with God? Shall we not then open more widely the way for the abounding grace of God in this evil world; shall we not endeavor to bring more of the sweet charity of heaven into the bitterness of this world?

The arts of poetry, music, and eloquence awaken feelings alike in the converted and in the unconverted—merely æsthetic feelings—but when these arts are conjoined to the expressions of religious truths, we recognize the feelings, awakened in the breast of the converted, as genuinely religious. Upon what ground, however, can it be maintained that the feelings thus awakened in the unconverted are never, and cannot ever be, genuinely religious? When the unconverted man in the worshipping assembly sings, with feeling, Chas. Wesley's hymn, *Jesus lover of my soul*, or Toplady's *Rock of ages cleft for me*, who will say that his feeling is not genuinely religious? What one of the con-

verted ever feels a shock when the unconverted man, sitting by his side, joins heartily in singing hymns that express the highest adoration, the most ardent love, the firmest faith, and the most confident hope; as though a sacred thing had been profaned and a horrible falsehood enacted? Can religious feelings be divided into two classes, distinguished, the one from the other, by a specific difference, the difference being not that the feelings in the one class are real, while those in the other class are not real; but that the feelings of the unconverted are the products of natural causes and, therefore, not gracious or saving, while those of the converted are the products of a supernatural agent and are, therefore, gracious and saving? Are the momentary feelings, excited at conversion, varying, as we have seen that they do, in different circumstances, from the highest ecstasy to the mildest fervor, ground enough for a distinction so momentous as that between the saved and the lost?

During the Civil War in the United States when the need for volunteers for the army was great, special means were adopted to excite the patriotic feelings of the people; in every town eloquent addresses were delivered; there were nightly bugle-calls; and companies of enlisted men marched through the streets to the stirring music of the fife and drum; and many were led by the excitement to join the ranks of the volun-

teers. The fact that they were thus led to that action was no reason for questioning the genuineness of their patriotism. But there were some persons, living in the rural regions, who, calmly considering the great principles in the issue and deciding, in the absence of all adventitious excitements, what their duty was, came into town and quietly enrolled their names in their country's army. Was their patriotism to be adjudged, on this account, less genuine than that of the others? Is it probable that they would be less faithful in the service; less patient under the hardships of the camp and the march, less alert on guard, less steadfast on the line of battle, or less courageous in the charge?

In our discussion of the changes of character, alleged to have been produced by conversion (138) we found it necessary to take account of social influences in effecting the change. It appeared that the mere fact that a man is recognized as a Christian by his fellow-men will operate, as a natural cause, to increase the amount of his emotion, and thus cause him to acquire a Christian character and lead a Christian life. We may now remark that the mere fact that a man is recognized as not being a Christian—and the want of conversion will always secure for him this recognition—will operate, as a natural cause, in the opposite direction, diminishing the amount of his religious emotion, and if not making him

positively un-Christian in character and conduct, yet suppressing all distinctively Christian acts.

So great is the mercy of God toward all them that fear him, that the pre-supposition of every man, the very moment he begins to think of his spiritual state, ought to be that God had already given him regeneration. The comprehension of the Lord's mercy went beyond the conception of his most judicious and earnest disciples.

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not. . . For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."[1]

The husbandman knows how important it is that every seed he sows should have a living germ in it; but he does not wait till he sees the germ, or observes it bursting from its encasement, before he will put it in the ground. Walking by faith not by sight, is the normal life of man in this world. Providence, acting behind or within natural causes, is the object of faith, not of sight, for that action is always invisible and inscrutable. Miracle is the object of sight, not of faith. When men begin to demand internal miracles, emotions and experiences which are miraculously produced,

[1] *Mark* ix., 38–41.

as evidence of their gracious state, they have decided to abandon faith and walk only by sight. Do they not render themselves obnoxious to the rebuke of our Lord: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe"?

CHAPTER II

What is the Church?

THE common doctrine of conversion is a centre of a whole system of ideas and operations; and, as any change in the centre of the solar system would necessarily be followed by a re-adjustment of the relations of all other bodies in that system, so a change in this doctrine would necessarily be followed by a revision of many of our present religious notions and especially of our doctrine of the church. On one occasion, "While the pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them saying, What think ye of Christ. Whose son is he?" a question of practical importance at that time; but it can hardly be held to be such a question now in any Christian land, for all men therein with insignificant exception, believe that Christ is the Son of God. A more practical question for us is, What think ye of the church?

The word is now used to mean so many different things that it is difficult to tell which one of them is meant in any particular case. A company of believers, who meet in a particular place for the

worship of God, is called a church; and persons from the outside world, who become members of the company, are said to have become members of the church. In every large town in a Christian land there are many such churches. Again, those churches, within a certain territory, which have agreed in accepting the same system of doctrine, in adopting the same form of worship, and in submitting to the same form of government, are called churches—as the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Congregational Church, and the Presbyterian Church. Again there is what is called the visible catholic church, composed of all the churches in the world. Then, there is the invisible catholic church, composed of all the believers on earth, together with the redeemed in heaven: the church of "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Membership in that church is of vital importance to every human being; but now, unhappily, it is assumed that membership in one or another of the ecclesiastical organizations formed by man is necessary to membership in that church. And still more unhappily, those organizations have prescribed various and contradictory terms of admission to their membership.

It is remarkable that our Lord formed no organization which he called the church, promulgated no constitution as its basis, and estab-

lished no form of law for its government. Only two instances are recorded in which he used the word church. "And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church."[1] "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."[2] In neither of these instances does he give any definition of the word church. There may be an implied definition by negation, in the last clause of the last of these passages; namely, that the church embraces all who are not heathen men or publicans. If so, we have to ask, When was that church organized; and, as there is no record of its organization, we have to ask, How did it come to be a body, the existence of which was supposed to be generally known. The word used, in both instances, was equivalent to the word congregation. The passage, in *Ps.* xxii., 22: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee," is quoted in the following form in *Heb.* ii., 12: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." The congregation or church spoken of evidently was a religious organization already in

[1] *Matt.* xvi., 18. [2] *Matt.* xviii., 16, 17.

existence; and, as there was no other of the kind at the time, it must have been the synagogue our Lord had in mind when he used the word church. The synagogue was a well-known organization for practical religious purposes, fellowship, prayer, reading and exposition of the Scriptures, exhortation and discipline: and for these purposes, it must have been a very concrete and compact organization; it had a ruler, a board of elders, a teacher, a messenger (the angel of the church), a minister (a janitor), and, in its discipline, it could go so far as to inflict corporal punishment. It was a body within the Jewish commonwealth, of which all the citizens were supposed to be members. But it was cosmopolitan, established all over the world; and all Jews residing in foreign countries were members. It appears that our Lord and his disciples were connected with the synagogue, continued in that connection, and used it for their own purposes. The prediction of the Lord that his disciples should be scourged in the synagogues, implied that they were, and would continue to be, members of that organization. When the apostle James, *James* ii., 1–2, in exhorting his brethren not to have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons, says: "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment," the word he uses is synagogue, not assembly. It appears not

only that there were Christian synagogues, but that Christians, agreeing in holding a certain system of doctrine, gathered together in synagogues by themselves, as Christians now do in their separate denominational churches; and that the doctrines taught in some of these synagogues—certainly in those of Ephesus and Philadelphia—were so erroneous and pernicious that the synagogues were denounced as synagogues of Satan.[1] It is probable that, as there had been a great synagogue, there was in every large city a confederation of the synagogues of disciples; and that the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Asia, etc., were such confederations.

Now, in the absence of any record of special organization by our Lord or his apostles, we are warranted in presuming that we have here the history of the beginning of the Christian church; and in assuming that all the present specializations are of human origin. From this it would follow that all the citizens of a Christian state who do not expressly deny that Jesus is the Son of God are members of the church. The adoption of this principle would bring our ecclesiastical and political institutions back to the form that was provided by divine wisdom for Israel, in which all citizens of the state were members of the church.

In a Christian country, the church and state would no longer be independent and conflicting

[1] *Rev.* ii., 9; iii., 9.

institutions; and the boundaries of the one would be coterminous with the boundaries of the other. It is to be observed that, in this country, notwithstanding the prevailing theory of the independence of the two, and our effort to secure an entire separation of the one from the other, we have not succeeded in effecting such a separation; and that, if we had succeeded it would have been at the cost of the public welfare.[1]

As all are citizens of the state who have not renounced their allegiance or have not, as a punishment for crime, been deprived of their citizenship, so all should be members of the church who are not avowed unbelievers or have not been cut off for offences committed. All the people of a Christian nation should, as the people of Israel did, count themselves as the chosen people of God; all under full obligation to perform every duty man owes to God. The office of the Christian minister, like that of the Hebrew prophet, should be to rebuke men for their not being and doing what their real relation to God requires, and for not enjoying in fulness the blessings to which they are entitled. All sin should be impartially and unsparingly condemned; it should be proclaimed that the wages of all sin, and not that the wages of the sin of not being converted, is death. Men

[1] Conf. *Spiritual Despotism*, by Isaac Taylor (Sr.) and *The Relation of Religion to Civil Government in the United States of America*; *A State Without a Church, but not Without a Religion*, by the author.

should be called to a repentance that is to be repeated all the days of their lives; and not to a repentance which is to occur only once in a lifetime. That whole system of ideas which applies the term "saint" to all of the converted, and the term "sinner" to all of the unconverted, should be discarded, as flagrantly untruthful and unjust. The persuasions of the minister, thus directed, might not result in a supposed miraculous experience here and there; but attended with the divine blessing, it would produce a sanctifying and elevating effect on all the people.[1]

No distinction should be made between religious and political duties; both should be performed as unto the Lord. The several congregations in a community might differ in matters of doctrine, in

[1] This was the vantage ground upon which Massillon stood when he preached before Louis XIV., that powerful sermon on the vices and virtues of the great, from the text *Matt.* iv., 8. He recognized no division in his audience into the converted and the unconverted—into Christians and sinners—he did not regard a part of his audience as under full obligation to obey the commandments of the Lord, and a part as under a modified or incomplete obligation to do so. His object was, not to convert the unconverted, not to persuade sinners to become Christians, but to turn all from sin unto righteousness; and it is said that the whole audience felt the power of his eloquence.

This vantage ground for the promotion of righteousness among men was possessed by the ancient prophets, and is now possessed by the Roman Catholic Church; but the Protestant church has been almost entirely dispossessed of it by its doctrine of conversion, which teaches the unconverted that they are enemies, unreconciled to God, and that no right-doing on their part can be accepted, or regarded with favor by him.

their forms of worship, and in ecclesiastical organization, and yet all be confederated as one church. The unity might be realized in a senate, composed of representatives of the several congregations in a prescribed district, as in the old times there were a synagogue and a great synagogue in the Jewish cities; and to this senate appeals might be taken in cases of discipline. The ecclesiastical and civil powers would both be regarded as ordinances of God, and would both be "a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well." Excommunication from the church would be dreaded as much as being "cut off from his people" was dreaded by the Israelite. Church discipline would be, what it now professes to be, but is not, an effective means of grace; for no rival denominational church would stand ready to receive the offender into its membership: he would be left to stand alone, with the whole community against him.

The church, as now organized in Christian lands, is not doing and cannot do all of the work the Lord commanded his disciples to do. Besides preaching, they were commanded to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. His church was to have a hand ever outstretched to supply all the wants of poor, ignorant, and suffering humanity. The state, in this country, provides nearly all of the hospitals for the sick; the asylums for the insane, the

dumb, the orphan, and the imbecile; the almshouses for the poor; schools for the primary, secondary, and the higher education of the children and youth. The branches of the Young Men's Christian Association, the various fraternal organizations, the Salvation Army, and a few institutional churches are moved to undertake different parts of the benevolent work the church was commissioned to do. But how paltry is the amount done by them all, compared with what the state has taken upon itself to do; and how inept and inadequate are the efforts the church is making to infuse a Christian element into the works of the state, especially into the work of educating the youth! Strange to say, it is only in heathen lands that the Christian church is doing all the work her Lord required her to do.[1]

[1] The author is not so visionary as to suppose that the Christian state and the Christian church will be brought into normal relationship, within a future that is near: neither is he so infatuated as to propose any movement toward that end. But he believes, that the contemplation of the ideal will not be hurtful; he believes, furthermore, that, as the ideal was realized in Israel, under divine direction, the world, under the same direction, will surely come to the realization again in some future time, however remote that time may be.

Mr. Romolo Murri, in the *Rassenga Nazionale* of Florence, says: "We think separation (of Church and State) a good and useful thing, so far as it implies the abolition of certain definite and historic relations which are no longer suitable or advantageous to either party. But separation, in the full sense of the term, as implying an utter absence of all connection between the two societies, we regard as a contradiction in terms. In order to

It appears that, in the fourth century, when the people of the Roman Empire had become generally Christians, the church and the state became one; or that each became an organ of one body, in correspondence with the divine and human natures of Christ. If we believe that God is in the church and in the world, ruling over all, we cannot believe that this incorporation of the two in one body was the result of a fortuitous drift in the affairs of men: and seeing that it did not attain unto completion till after the lapse of several centuries, we cannot believe that it was the work and device of man. We must regard it as an evolution, moved and guided by the divine Spirit. The expansion of the two members of this one body into a world-wide comprehension; the church into a Holy Catholic church, in which all peoples should be united in one universal brotherhood, nourished, in their spiritual life, by one mother-church; the state, into the Holy Roman Empire, in which all the nations should be united under one government, thus making the bloodshed and desolation of war to cease for ever, was a consummation which the Christian could not but desire with all his heart, and for

obtain such a separation it would be necessary to cut the conscience of every human individual in two: one half to be the director of religious activity, the other half, of all the remaining sphere of life. The Church and the State by this unity of the human conscience, are made one in their pursuit of the very highest ends."

which he could not but labor with all his energy. But, in this case, as in that of the institutions given by God to Israel, what was good was perverted to evil by the weakness, the folly, and wickedness of man. While, in theory, opposition between pope and emperor seemed to be impossible, each being a servant of the same King; each being bound to aid and foster the other; yet in time differences of opinion arose between them on questions of policy and jurisdiction. Hildebrand asserted the superior authority of the pope, on the ground that the interests of the soul, intrusted to him, were superior to the interests of the body, which were intrusted to the emperor. He compared the authority of the pope to the light of the sun and that of the emperor to the light of the moon, which shines only with a light received from the sun. The controversies grew into conflicts till the state ceased to be an empire, and the church ceased to be catholic. And now, since the individualism of the Reformation, in opposition to the collectivism of the medieval church, has been making the church less catholic than ever, there is a tendency toward an entire separation, not only of the church but of all religion, from the state. This, when accomplished, will surely be an unsatisfactory and an unstable condition; for the mass of the people, in all the most civilized nations, will be not only religious but Christian. There can hardly be a doubt that

the divine power of evolution, which is working in all the world, will in time bring the various states, on the one hand, and the various churches, on the other hand, into two great confederations; and will bring both into a holy catholic union, in which they will join in acknowledging the authority of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Very gratifying indications of the working of that power are already visible. Must not the World's Evangelical Alliance, the peace conferences, the establishment of The Hague Tribunal, the treaties of arbitration, the Postal Union, and the organization of a Congress of the Nations be attributed to the indwelling and working of the spirit of Christ in the hearts of men?

It can hardly be denied that one of the greatest obstacles in the way of this glorious consummation is the doctrine of conversion, which makes a division among men that is utterly irreconcilable. The converted can never consistently recognize the unconverted as members of the same spiritual body with themselves.

CHAPTER III

Evangelism

THE doctrine of conversion has brought a new office into the church; not new in name, but new in function: evangelism, attended with evils peculiar to itself.

The name of the various offices of the church, provided by our Lord, are given by the apostle Paul in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, iv., 11: "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Only two persons are mentioned in the New Testament as having been evangelists, Philip and Timothy, and only once is each spoken of as an evangelist.[1] Taking into view all that is said in the New Testament on the subject, we find that the evangelist was an itinerant while the pastor or teacher was stationed at one place. It is probable that when

[1] *Acts* xxi., 8. "The next day we that were of Paul's company departed and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him."

2 *Tim.* iv., 5. "Do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry."

the "murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration," was quieted by the attendance of the "seven" to that work, Philip entered upon the work of an evangelist. When the disciples were scattered abroad by the persecutions of Saul, we are told that "they went everywhere preaching the word, then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." The only other instance of his doing the work of an evangelist on record is his expounding, to the Ethiopian eunuch, *Acts* viii., 37: "He began at the same scripture and preached Christ unto him." There is no record of any particular work that Timothy did as an evangelist, and it appears that Philip soon took up a permanent residence at Cæsarea, and that when Paul was making his last journey to Jerusalem he and his companions were entertained there by Philip "many days."

If the work of the evangelist was, in the early days of the church, what it is held to be now—the most important work the church has to do—it is remarkable that so few records of it have been made. It is remarkable also that in the only instance of which a full record has been made, it is so different, in its circumstances, its form, and mode, from the evangelism of the present day.

It is probable that it was the special work of the evangelist of the early church to make Jesus

known, as the Son of God and the redeemer of the world, in regions where he was entirely unknown: the work which the missionary in heathen lands is now doing, a work entirely different from that of the modern evangelist.[1] His work is given exclusively to those who have the knowledge of Jesus, but who have not had the experience of conversion, and who are regarded as lost sinners; the whole object of his work is the saving of sinners. Paul thus describes the service which the offices instituted by Christ were intended to render: "The perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is remarkable that he does not mention as a part of that service—not even as a part of the service of the evangelist—the conversion and the saving of sinners.

Among the evils of evangelism in its practical working are:

1. That it is Necessarily and Purposely Partial in its Chosen Work of Saving Sinners. The work of the evangelist is now given only on the condition that all, or a number, of the churches of the place unite in the effort; that a

[1] Some denominations, in ordaining men who are going to the foreign field, ordain them expressly as evangelists and not as pastors or merely as ministers of the gospel.

tabernacle be erected, or other large auditorium be provided, for the accommodation of the great assembly; so it is, of course, a work that is possible only in the large towns and cities. The complacency with which our modern evangelism leaves the sinners in the rural regions to perish is strangely incongruous with its burning zeal for the salvation of those that dwell in the cities, especially seeing that the former largely outnumber the latter.[1]

2. It Discourages and Disparages the Work of the Pastor. Since the advent of evangelism, not only has there been no expectation of a revival and of the conversion of sinners by the pastor in the rural districts, but none has been expected to occur under the ministry of the pastor in the towns and cities. He may be sincere and earnest in all his labors; unsparing of himself in the preparation for all his services; he may put forth his utmost strength in all his efforts; he may pray without ceasing for a revival; but evangelism, affirming that revivals now come only by its agency, has weakened his faith and his prayer is not answered. He is now only the forerunner to prepare the way for the coming of the evangelist; and he might well say of the evangelist, what John the Baptist said of our Lord, "he must increase, but I must decrease," for it has already taken place.

[1] The census of 1900 make the rural population of the United States to be 67 per cent., and the urban to be 33 per cent. of the whole.

Not only has much of the fruit of the pastor's labor gone to the evangelist, but much of his enjoyment of it also. The sermon is, in a proper sense, a work of art; it is like other works of art, in that it is intended to act upon the feelings; but unlike, in that it is intended to act upon the highest of all feelings and for the most important of all practical purposes.

> "In the elder days of art
> Builders wrought, with greatest care,
> Each minute and unseen part,
> For the gods see everywhere."

For this and other reasons, must the sermon be so wrought. The truth must be presented in its most convincing form; the argument must be made conclusive; the parts must be marshalled so as to contribute the utmost to the final effect; the connections must be obvious; the transitions easy; the style simple and pleasing; and the whole must be embellished with illustrations that sparkle as the stars of night.

When all has been completed, then, to be filled with the appropriate feeling and present it to a large, alert, attentive, eagerly expectant audience, is one of the purest and most exalted of pleasures; a pleasure far exceeding that of the painter or sculptor in beholding the admiration which the public is giving to his masterpiece. This is a pleasure which the evangelist enjoys to the full;

but it is one which the pastor, who has to prepare two sermons every week, besides preparing for a mid-week service, year after year, cannot possess. The evangelist has also the pleasure of always seeing some immediate results of his labors; and going as he does from place to place, after a short stay in each, and using over and over again a short list of sermons which, in their order and in all their parts, he has wrought up to his ideal of excellence and effectiveness, his joy in the work is made to be full and continuous.

These features of the evangelistic work will operate on pastors as a powerful temptation to enter the evangelistic field: indeed, all pastors might well desire to be evangelists; it will operate with special force upon those who, through weakness or other unfitness, have been unsuccessful in the pastorate.

Under these influences, it could hardly be otherwise than that some ministers who have not been sought for the work would seek the work of the evangelist. While it would be improper to suppose that they are not acting from the highest motives, or that they do not believe that they are so acting; yet there is reason for the supposition that, in some of them, inferior motives do sometimes rise to the ascendancy, and that some ministers take up evangelism for the sake of the excitement, the appreciation, and the remuneration it brings. It may be that with some evangelists

the play upon the religious feelings may have become an occupation or business by which their livelihood is to be gained.

There are certain feelings, natural to the human soul, which ordinarily lie in slumber but which may be roused by means of the appropriate art. The feelings roused by music, the opera, and the drama, may be taken as examples of the fact. In these cases the artist will be more successful in his work if he himself possess the feeling or if he be skilled in feigning it. The demand for the pleasure thus obtained is so great that certain persons devote their lives to the cultivation and practice of the art, and thousands of people are in attendance upon their performances every night in the year.

It is plain that the religious feeling is of this character, and that the work of the evangelist is in some respects the same as that of the musician, the opera singer, and the tragedian. There is, however, this difference, that the feelings roused in the concert hall and in the theatre are not supposed to work any change in the nature and destiny of the subject, while those roused by the evangelist are supposed to change the child of Satan into a child of God, and to turn his destiny from a world of eternal woe to a world of everlasting blessedness. There is also this difference, that the feeling roused by the artist may be called into play again and again, while the feeling

excited by the evangelist, on account of the momentous changes consequent upon it, need not be excited again, however deep the slumber into which it may have fallen.

That evangelism does sometimes become an occupation or business appears from the fact that business methods are employed to secure constant employment: such as the distribution, through the mails, of pamphlets and circulars, containing offers of service, the terms of service, personal recommendations, and press-notices. The examples of business methods given in the note below will show that the supposition just stated is not entirely without foundation.[1]

[1] The author has lately received a blotter for his desk, together with a little pamphlet entitled, *Revival Work and Soul-Winning*, containing thirty-four personal recommendations and a statement of the benefits of union meetings. A likeness of the evangelist, with his name below, fills the left end of the blotter; and on the right end is a fac-simile of the following letter: "It gives me great pleasure to recommend my friend ——to all the churches of Christ. D. L. Moody. Denver, Dec. 25, 1898." In the body, at the top, in large capitals are the words, "Your Next Revival." Then the following, viz.: "Dear Brother Pastor:— No doubt you are thinking of your next revival meetings. I send you this blotter which suggests three different ways of conducting special evangelistic meetings." Then follows a statement of "The Ordinary Way: The Better Way: The Best Way"; after which the permanent address of the evangelist is given, with the statement, "Member of the Interdenominational Association of Evangelists. Commended by D. L. Moody, Dr. R. A. Torrey, Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, Dr. S. M. Neil (Sam Jones), C. H. Yatman, Bishop Hendrlx. Write soon: DO IT NOW, if you desire my help." At the bottom, in capital letters, is the

3. It gives an incorrect answer to the question, **What is the First and Most Important Duty of Christians.** A distinguished evangelist, at a large convention of clergymen, asserted that "the main business of every Christian should be the winning of souls." Pamphlets and leaflets have been widely distributed throughout the church, entitled "Soul-Winning," and giving instructions upon the way in which the work is to be done. The main business of every Christian, according to this statement, is not obedience to our Lord's command: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"; "that ye love one another, as I have loved you";

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following, "Keep This Blotter Within Sight. Pray to Father, Think, Then Write."

In the pamphlet, the following statements of the benefit of union meetings are given, viz.:

"5. Statistics prove that most people who are saved, are saved in and through special meetings, and union meetings are the best kind of special meetings to hold.

"6. The financial expense is less on each church when ALL (or as many as will) unite. When the Christians are revived and souls saved, THEN the people will cheerfully give of their money.

"7. A union meeting, with its unmeasurable blessing, is generally born in the heart of some ONE PERSON and then like FIRE spreads. A union meeting can be held at any time or in any place where the pastors are willing.

"A REVIVAL ALWAYS BEGINS WITH A FEW.

"Reader, will you make this prayer your DAILY PRAYER until the answer comes:

"O LORD, SEND A REVIVAL AND BEGIN IT IN ME. I ASK IT IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN."

not compliance with the apostolic injunctions: "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"; "put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness"; not the possession of that gift which is above that of the tongues of men and of angels, above the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, and above the faith that can remove mountains; not the exercise of that sweet quiet grace which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, . . . beareth all things, endureth all things." Not all, nor any of these, is the Christian to regard as his main business, but "soul-winning."

The terms are "(1) A call signed by the pastor or pastors. (2) Travelling expenses from —— to your city, and entertainment. (3) Free-will offering, taken in our way, for the evangelist."

Among the numerous circulars which have come to the author's hand is one containing this statement: "In three meetings at —— 450 professed conversion; at —— 325 conversions; 90 per cent. men in two meetings. In the meetings at —— there was one convert for about every $4.00 spent. In the meetings at —— one for every $2.00." Enclosed with the circular was a folder in the shape of a blotter, having the likeness of the evangelist on the one end and that of the singer on the other end; and, in the middle, the programme of the meeting on one day in a certain town. Of the five numbers on the programme one is, "MEETING FOR MEN ONLY (no boys under 12 admitted). Subject, MAN'S SIN AGAINST WOMAN." Another number is "A meeting for women only." That one of these, at least, was intended to be an attraction appears in a note at the bottom of the programme; "The special service, for MEN ONLY, will be the greatest address the evangelist will give during the meetings."

The meaning of this uncouth and unscriptural phrase, if it be taken from the operation itself, is nothing more than exciting in others, by persuasion and by personal sympathetic influence, that amount of religious emotion which, at the time, is held to constitute conversion and to secure salvation.

We are very far from denying that every believer has a work to do in the propagation of our holy religion among his fellow-men, but we are constrained to regard the method prescribed by our Lord as the one by which that work will be most effectively done. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

We are very far from denying that it is a duty of the disciple of Christ to be concerned for the welfare of his fellow-men; we hold the apostolic injunction, "Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the things of others,"[1] to be of a permanent and universal application. We hold that the love which goes out to others in self-sacrificing service, is to be the distinguishing characteristic of the disciple of Christ. But the question remains, whether that concern is to be devoted wholly or chiefly to any one particular in the welfare of others, to what we have come to regard as the salvation of their souls. The answer to this question ought to be

[1] *Phil.* ii., 4.

taken from the tenor of the teaching of our Lord and his apostles. When Jesus sent out the twelve, he said unto them, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received freely give."[1] And his last commission was: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[2] In the first instance, he commands only the relief of temporal evils; in neither, does he command the conversion and saving of men. In the Judgment, those whom he will pronounce blessed of his Father, and whom the Father will bid to enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, are those who have given meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, shelter to the stranger, clothing to the naked, and have visited the sick and the imprisoned.[3] It is remarkable that he does not once, in this connection, mention the converting and the saving of men.

As often as the word saviour is used in the New Testament, man is not once called the saviour of his fellow-man. In only one instance is man spoken of as the agent in the conversion of another. The apostle James says, "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his

[1] *Matt.* x., 7–8.
[2] *Matt.* xxviii., 19–20.
[3] *Matt.* xxvi., 34.

way, shall save a soul from death."[1] It appears that the persons James had in mind, as the objects of conversion, were brethren; for he prefaces his exhortation with the words, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him: let him know that he that converteth a sinner. . . ."

Evidently, the word convert is not used in this instance in the technical sense which has been given to it by our evangelism; for the work of the evangelist is not the conversion of erring brethren but the saving of sinners.

4. **It is Sacerdotal in its Pretentions.** It professes to be an efficient agent in the salvation of sinners. Men, by an inborn tendency, are ever looking for the divine to appear in human form and as a helper toward their higher life; it is to them the ideal of what man ought to be and is to be; and they find great pleasure in beholding in men any approach to that ideal. The professional evangelist, being almost always a stranger, known only by the reputation which has preceded him, is always taken to be such an one. His work and his whole carriage and manner are regarded as evidence that he has a special nearness to God, indeed that he is a veritable man of God; and it is to the impression prevailing among the people, that he is such an one, that much of his success is due. His especial work is to bring men to Christ

[1] *James* v., 20.

and thereby procure their salvation. He assumes to be an efficient intermediary between the sinner and Christ, which is a sacerdotal office.

The personal presumption in the sacerdotalism of the Roman Catholic Church is greatly mitigated, indeed almost entirely concealed, by the hiding of the person under the forms and vestments of the priestly office. But when a Protestant assumes to be spiritually so near to God and so far above his fellow-men that he may undertake to act as their mediator, bringing them to Christ and assisting them to obtain reconciliation with God, we have a sacerdotalism in which the personal presumption is without mitigation or covering. It is true that the evangelist persuades the sinner to come himself to Christ; but in so far as his supposed sanctity contributes to the success of his persuasion, he performs a sacerdotal function.[1]

5. Overlooks the Necessity, and Undervalues the Means of Spiritual Culture.—The kingdom of heaven is, in the heart of man, as it is in the world, "like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field"; or "like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal": small at first, even hidden,

[1] At a revival meeting in a fairly intelligent community, the author once heard a noted ministerial evangelist say, when the unconverted were slow in rising to express their desire for the prayers of Christians: "Just rise and we 'll try and get you saved to-night."

yet growing and expanding by an inherent power of development, when placed in the proper conditions. The mustard seed must be sown where it will receive the sunshine, the rain, and dew of heaven; and it must be diligently cultivated; the leaven must be kept in a place which has the requisite warmth. It would be a foolish and serious mistake to neglect to provide the necessary conditions, in the one case, because the seed was "the least of all seeds"; and in the other, because the leaven was entirely hidden. It would be a like mistake to neglect spiritual culture, because the spiritual life was as yet hidden, not having manifested itself sensibly in the experience of conversion.

A large part of the Christian world regards the covenant made with Abraham as a covenant of grace: a promise to be a God to Abraham's children in the same sense in which he was the God of Abraham himself,—Father, Guide, Protector, and Redeemer,—and they cannot believe that this covenant was narrowed in its comprehension by the coming of Christ. They believe that the substitution of baptism for circumcision, as the seal of the covenant, did not change the covenant itself. As the child of the Israelite was a member of the commonwealth of Israel, and was entitled to partake of the passover supper with his parents; so they believe that the child of believing parents is a member of the church, and is entitled to

partake of the Lord's Supper with them: the one supper being a memorial of a great deliverance in which the lamb was a symbol of "Christ, our passover sacrificed for us": both being memorial and symbol of the greater deliverance. They believe that circumcision represented an inward circumcision, that of the heart, and that baptism represents an inward washing, the washing of regeneration; they believe that their children are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, not with doubt, nor even with hope, but with the firmest faith that the spiritual nurture bestowed upon them is bestowed upon the living, not upon the dead. They regard their children as babes in Christ, to be nourished with milk, "the sincere milk of the word," that they may grow thereby; they do not wait for a spiritual convulsion to take place before beginning the nurture, and do not expect the future growth to come only in paroxysms; they believe that "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little," from the words which have proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord, will be effective for growth towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. These children of the covenant are regarded by evangelism as lost sinners until they are converted. They may experience conversion; indeed, the culture they have received and the privation to which they have ordinarily

been subjected will render them especially responsive to the influences which produce conversion; but to suppose that before that event they were children of Satan, and that only in that event they became children of God, is to reject the covenanted mercies of our God. It is probable, therefore, that there are many persons outside of the church, in whom the kingdom of God is as the mustard seed or as the leaven, but to whom the means of spiritual culture are denied on the ground that, not having been converted, the use of those means would be utterly ineffective, like giving nutriment to the dead.

Spiritual progress, no matter how or when it began, is, in all cases, accomplished by culture, an advancement which is constant, and so gradual as to be ascertainable only by comparison of the state at the beginning and end of a long period of time. One dressing and keeping of the ground will not produce a blooming and fruitful Eden; one sunbeam, however bright, and one shower, however warm and copious, will not cause the blade to spring up into the ear with the full corn in the ear; one visit to the city will not impart urbanity to the rustic; one evening spent in association with the cultured will not give refinement to the rude; and one visit to the museum of art will not endow the barbarian with a fine æsthetic sense; even though the impression produced by the magnificence of the city, the elegance of the

drawing-room, and the array of paintings and sculptures in the museum, may have been vivid and powerful. Neither will the raptures of conversion impart real spiritual elevation to the sinner. The image of God is to be restored and the likeness of Christ is to be obtained by continual converse with the truth and by constancy in prayer, worship, and service. Culture must, it is true, proceed upon conditions precedent, constitutional conditions, which God alone can supply. For this reason, we cannot accept as correct Mr. Matthew Arnold's definition: namely, that "Culture is to know the best that has been thought and said in the world."[1] It is not the knowledge, but the effect of the knowledge, that constitutes culture. Two persons may have equal knowledge, but the effect of the knowledge may be very different in the one from what it is in the other, the difference arising from a difference in susceptibility, which is a constitutional difference. The condition precedent to spiritual culture must be the gift of God; but the gift ought to be presupposed by every one who desires that culture; and there should be no waiting for the raptures of conversion to assure him of the bestowal. That condition is, in theological terms, regeneration. If it be admitted that the emotions of conversion may spring from regeneration as a blaze springs from the burning wood on the hearth; yet it must

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, p. xxvii.

be remembered that the lightest material, such as shavings or straw, makes the largest blaze, while the hardest wood or coal, though it makes but little or no blaze, leaves an enduring bed of glowing coals. It would be a woful mistake to go out from that bed and shiver in the winter blast, because no blaze appeared. A no less woful mistake would it be to neglect the means of spiritual culture, or to use them in a doubting, hopeless mood, waiting for the raptures of conversion to come. It must be conceded that the idea of conversion, now prevalent in a large part of the Christian world, is productive of some good, in that it leads a certain number of persons to make faithful use of the means of spiritual culture who, but for that, might never have done so. But it can hardly be denied that it is productive of some evil, in that it has laid a discouragement, if not a prohibition, on a certain number of others who, but for that, might have made profitable use of those means.[1] The ques-

[1] The growing disbelief of the common doctrine, that only the converted are Christians, that only they are saved, that only they may use the means of spiritual culture with the hope of benefit; that the unconverted are not Christians, that they are unsaved, and that the means of spiritual culture, however sincerely and assiduously used, will be of no benefit to them, has come to a very distinct expression both within and without the church.

Within, it appears in the fact that certain large denominations which, not many years ago, required a conversion of a very pronounced character as a condition of membership, are now pro-

tion whether the good overbalances the evil will be easily determined; for, if there is a moral government of the world, it will forbid us to suppose that an error will ever exceed a truth in the production of good.

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claiming their willingness to accept a simple decision as sufficient, saying nothing about any degree of emotion with which the decision should be made, and have appointed a "decision-day," which they recommend to be observed annually or semi-annually by all their Sunday-schools and churches.

Without the church, it appears in the religious character which has been given to the various orders and societies organized by men for their mutual benefit. These societies require good character, but not conversion, as a condition of membership. They have provided themselves with some of the means of spiritual culture; they have more or less of religious ritual in their regular exercises; and have a burial service for their deceased members, in which there is affirmation of the essential truths of Christianity, prayer and exhortation. Great numbers of men, unable to admit the momentous issues which the church declares to be dependent upon conversion, and unwilling to accept a position in which the profession of so immense a difference between themselves and their fellow-men is implied, have abandoned all thought of ever uniting with the church. The church, therefore, rejects, as not being Christians and as unsaved, men who really desire to possess a spiritual character and to obtain spiritual growth, men who might equal, in efficiency and worthiness, many of its accepted members, causing that reduction in the proportion of men in its membership which is beginning to be more and more conspicuous, 39.3 per cent. in all Protestant churches being males, 60.7 per cent. being females.—*Bulletin of U. S. Census Bureau*, August 19, 1909.

CHAPTER IV

Repentance and Forgiveness

THE ethical sense, which has for its object the perception of right and wrong, is one of the faculties with which Nature has endowed all mankind. It is like the other senses, in that its action is attended with feelings, either pleasant or unpleasant; in that its perceptions may occasionally be illusory, and the judgments, based thereon, erroneous also; in that it may be dulled by evil habits, but it is unlike them in that it cannot be destroyed. It is like the æsthetic sense, which has beauty for its object and gives both pleasure and pain to the artist. He is pained at the dulness of that sense and at his inability to give full expression to his conception. The painful feeling is strengthened if, beside the ideal springing up in his mind, he have a model of the perfect before him, but this pain is a necessary condition of success in his work. "Made perfect through suffering" is the law of human progress in this world. Pleasant feelings attend the perception of what in being or doing is thought to be

right, and painful feelings attend what is thought to be wrong. These feelings are strengthened by the impression that right and wrong affect the personal welfare. That this impression is sure to come, and that it has become general, is shown, among other things, by the maxim that honesty is the best policy. These feelings are still further strengthened when the idea of a God comes into the mind, especially if it be of a God who is holy, just, and good; who made the world and governs it; to whom, as his Creator, man is rightfully subject.

One of the striking peculiarities of this world is that things are never all that man would wish them to be; there are in it many good things, but there are many evil things also,—troubles, misfortunes, and sufferings; and the mingled good and evil go on to the worst of all evils, death. The evils cannot be explained as the wanton inflictions of a good God; the only reasonable explanation is to be found in the two facts that God is just as well as good, and that man is a sinner, "Sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned."[1] It is, therefore, the most important practical concern of man to obtain the forgiveness of his sins. To this end certain preliminary conditions, both on the part of God and on the part of man, are necessary. This necessity arises

[1] *Rom.* v., 12.

from the fact that freedom is the prerogative of rational creatures. No government, either human or divine, may force such creatures to do right; it must affix a penalty to the law, leaving the subject free to choose between obedience and the penalty of disobedience. The irrational creatures, subject to our government, have no such freedom; we force them to obey our commands. If the law of God is a law of life, the penalty of disobedience is, as a matter of course, death. Two things preliminary to forgiveness on the part of God are necessary: 1. That some provision be made for the removal of the penalty from the sinner. 2. That the provision for its removal shall not be made futile by the necessity of a subsequent infliction of it. Provision has been made to meet both of these requirements. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That Son "put away sins by the sacrifice of himself." "He bear our sins in his own body on the tree." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." He also sends his creating Spirit into the heart of man, giving him a new birth, implanting a new life in which, when fully developed, there will be no possibility of sinning.

Repentance. The preliminary condition to forgiveness, on the part of man, is that it must be sought; but it will not be sought until the sinner

feels keenly the painfulness of not being and doing right, and feels also his inability to remove the penalty of his sins and to create in himself a new heart, which feeling is repentance.

It was, therefore, in accordance with the nature of things that John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for the coming Lord, should preach the baptism of repentance; natural also that it should be said of Jesus: "Him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."[1]

Confession. If the penitent feels not only that his sin has brought suffering and death upon himself but that it has been an offence against God, he will be moved to confession; and the feeling which may have been vague and general will be rendered definite and specific, by the effort to give it expression, thus making the desire for forgiveness more urgent; but, this having taken place, he may be assured of forgiveness; for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[2] The penitent can find no truer expression of his painful feeling than these: "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother

[1] *Acts* v., 31. [2] 1 *John* i., 9.

conceive me."[1] The forgiven sinner can find no words that more truly describe his experience than these: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. . . . I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."[2] It is true that when repentance has once been made and forgiveness has once been granted, salvation has been obtained; nevertheless, we are taught to pray daily, "Forgive us our trespasses." We need, therefore, daily repentance and daily forgiveness.

May it not be that the joy of forgiveness comes by a natural reaction from the pain of repentance as the crested waves in the waters of the sea follow the trough; the one being the occasional cause of the other and the efficient cause of both being the invisible breath of heaven. Are they not doing despite unto the goodness of God who purposely postpone repentance until it shall have come to them in a way which they suppose to be miraculous, and then repent no more nor seek the forgiveness of their sins? Might not the daily prayer of the forgiven penitent be, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."[3]

It is true that the Spirit of God acts directly

[1] *Ps.* li., 4–5. [2] *Ps.* xxxii., 3–5. [3] *Ps.* li., 1–2.

upon the heart of the sinner to give repentance as he gives the new birth, but is it not in the one case as we are told that it is in the other, the action is not perceptible by the person in whom it takes place. It may be presumed that God, in giving repentance to men, would utilize all the natural means that tend to that result—that he would employ his providence in accomplishing the purposes of his grace. Among these means two may be mentioned:

1. **The Goodness of God.** When the sinner comes to realize that God "is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good gift and every perfect gift"; realizes that "he has not left himself without witness, in that he did good and he gave us rain from heaven and fruitful season, filling our hearts with food and gladness"; if he looks abroad, he has to say "the whole earth is full of thy riches"; when he looks back upon his own life, he has to say, "Many, O Lord, my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are to usward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered"; when he remembers that he has been like the heathen who, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful,—" they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,—he will sorrow that he has so acted not knowing that the "goodness and for-

bearance, and longsuffering, of God leadeth thee . . . to repentance."[1]

2. The Love of God in Giving His Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin. When the sinner beholds the innocent one suffering unto death the dreadful agonies of the cross and remembers that he was "wounded for our transgression and bruised for our iniquities," the spectacle will operate as a powerful natural means to bring him to repentance. Thomas Carlyle well said that "of all acts for man, is not repentance the most divine?"[2] In view of the freedom and responsibility of man, and of the mode of the Spirit's action, does he not suffer incalculable loss who delays repentance till a sensible action of the Spirit takes place in his heart?

[1] *Rom.* ii., 4.

[2] *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 36.

CHAPTER V

The Evangelism Needed

THERE is a work which an agency like our modern evangelism might well undertake to do—the elevation of the tone of religious feeling in Christian people, the quickening of their spiritual life, a work which the Roman Catholic Church is doing by its "missions." It is a work which is always greatly needed, and, if done, its reflex influence upon the world would be felt everywhere. The invitation, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good," would be accepted by larger numbers than those who now respond to the call of the evangelist: and entering upon a course of spiritual culture would be continually growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the use of the means of spiritual culture, there are special encouragements. In the first place, those who are engaged in the pursuit of it have an organic unity, like that of the human body; one life pervades them all, creating a common sympathy and leading to a mutual co-opera-

tion. "The whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." In the second place, there is a spiritual presence ever with us, like the atmosphere, in which we "live and move and have our being"; a loving but invisible Providence, which is disposed to favor our efforts by adding the divine energy to our own, and by combining all circumstances propitiously for the work. It is the same immanent potency, the effect of which we see in the progress that has been made, from the time when "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep" to the present time of organization and light; the potency that has led on the development, from the algæ of the Archaic Age and the invertebrates of the Silurian Age, to the multiform flora and fauna of the present age, of which man, though still imperfect, is the crown and glory.

Furthermore, it will be proper for evangelism to endeavor to produce in all men, if possible, an experience like that of the raptures of conversion or the ecstasies of mysticism. The susceptibility to such experiences must be presumed to have been implanted in our nature by the Creator to serve some good purpose. These feelings, when aroused, give us one of our purest and most

exalted pleasures, and it will be perfectly proper to seek the pleasure for its own sake, even though we are unable to comprehend the purpose it was intended to serve. We employ the dramatic art, fiction, music, and all the fine arts for this purpose. It is true that this kind of enjoyment may become a dissipation, but the abuse of that which is good is not ground enough for the condemnation of its proper use. The religious rapture will be of short duration, as nature has not energy enough to make it perpetual; and, once experienced, it may not return again. But the memory of it will be a precious possession; it will steady the walk, and hasten the progress, in the path of life, just as the first passionate love of husband and wife, though not enduring, yet is sweet in the memory, and tends to the maintenance of a steady devotion and a constant affection. Blessed will be the evangelism that shall do this work without attaching to the experience it reproduces such momentous consequences as the translation from the wrath into the love of God, the transition from a destiny of eternal torment in hell to a destiny of everlasting joy in heaven. Neither our Lord nor any of the apostles taught that the rapture was an essential constituent of the faith, by means of which this change is accomplished.

Appendix

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

Gathered from a Wide Range of Space and Time

IT is remarkable that no cases of conversion are to be found in the Old Testament. Cain and Esau had the painful feeling of repentance, but we are not told that it was followed by that joyful sense of forgiveness which is now held to be an essential constituent of conversion.

Only four cases of conversion are recorded in the New Testament, that of Peter, of Paul, of Cornelius and those who were assembled with him to hear the words of Peter, and of the jailer at Philippi; and in all of these cases either the antecedent depression or the subsequent exaltation of feeling was wanting. Peter's conversion occurred long after he had been acknowledged by the Lord to be a true disciple.

St. Augustine (A.D. 354–430), in making record of his conversion, says:

"Such was the story of Pontitianus. But thou, O Lord, while he was speaking, didst turn me towards myself, taking me from behind my back, where I had placed myself while unwilling to exercise self-scrutiny; and thou didst set me face to face with myself, that I

might behold how foul I was, and how crooked and sordid, bespotted and ulcerous. And I beheld and loathed myself; and whither to fly from myself I discovered not. And if I sought to turn my gaze away from myself, thou again opposedst me unto myself, and thrustedst me before my own eyes, that I might discover my iniquity and hate it. . . . Thus was I sick, and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain, till that was utterly broken, whereby I now was but slightly held. And thou O Lord pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and that same remaining slender tie, not being broken off, it should recover strength, and enchain me the faster. For I said mentally, 'Lo, let it be now, let it be now.' And as I spoke, I all but came to a resolve, I all but did it, yet did it not. . . . The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garments and whispered softly, 'Dost thou part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever?' . . . Yet they did delay me, so that I hesitated to burst and shake myself free from them and to leap whither I was called,—an unruly habit saying to me, 'Dost thou think thou canst live without them?' . . .

"But when a profound reflection had, from the depths of my soul, drawn together and heaped up all my misery before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by as mighty a shower of tears, which, that I might pour forth fully, with its natural expressions, I stole away from Alypius: for it

suggested itself to me that solitude was fitter for the business of weeping. . . . I flung myself down, how, I know not, under a certain fig tree, giving free course to my tears, and the streams of mine eyes gushed out, an acceptable sacrifice to thee. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, spake I much to thee, . . . 'But thou O Lord, how long?' 'How long Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Oh remember not against us former iniquities'; for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries, . . . 'How long, how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?' I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when lo, I heard the voice of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; take up and read.' Immediately my countenance was changed. . . . So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from heaven, to open the book and to read the first chapter I should light upon. For I heard of Antony that, accidentally coming in whilst the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, 'Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come and follow me.' And by such oracle was he forthwith converted unto thee. So quickly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell, . . . 'Not in rioting and

drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' No further would I read, nor did I read; for instantly, as the sentence ended,—by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart, —all the gloom of doubt vanished away."[1]

Martin Luther (1483–1546). At the age of eighteen Luther entered the University of Erfurt, where, being studious and of a serious turn of mind, he gave himself diligently to his books and earnestly implored the divine blessing on his studies. After taking his degree, he devoted himself, in accordance with his father's earnest desire, but not in accordance with his own preference, to the study of law. One morning it was reported that Alexis, a fellow student and intimate friend, had been assassinated, and on repairing to the spot, he found the report to be true. It affected him deeply. He said to himself, "what would become of me, if I should be so suddenly called away"; and his mind was troubled by the continually recurring question. Not long afterwards, as he was returning from a visit to his home, and was nearing Erfurt, he was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm and the lightning struck the ground at his side. He was so terrified that he fell upon his knees and vowed that, if God would deliver him from this danger, he would devote his life to his service. But he must become holy in order to serve the Holy One acceptably. He now thirsted for holiness, as he had thirsted for

[1] *Confessions*, Book XIII, chapters ix–xii.

knowledge; but where is it to be found? In seclusion from the world. One evening he invited some of his college friends to a little feast; and when the gaiety was at its height, he announced his determination to his friends. They opposed it, but in vain. It was his farewell to the world. At the age of twenty-two, he was admitted to the convent of the Augustinians at Erfurt. He continued his studies, but he was seeking holiness more than knowledge, and perused diligently the writings of the fathers, especially those of St. Augustine. He sought holiness by faithful obedience to the rules of the monastic life, by the most arduous and menial labors of the monastery, and by the most rigorous mortifications of the flesh. Often a little bread and a single herring were his only food; and, for days together, he would go without food or drink. One day he shut himself in his cell and would allow no one to approach him; and when the door was broken open, he was found stretched on the floor, unconscious, and without any signs of life, and would doubtless have perished but for the interference of his brethren. Yet, withal, he found not the holiness he was seeking. The vicar-general, the wise and good Staupitz, observing him, was attracted to him, and conversed sympathetically with him about his spiritual troubles. He said to the young man, "Look to the wound of Jesus Christ, to the blood which he has shed for you; it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in him, in the righteousness of his life, in the expiatory sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink from him; God is not against you; it is you who

are estranged and averse from God." The answer was, "How can I dare to believe in the favor of God, so long as there is in me no real conversion. I must be changed before he can receive me." "There is," said Staupitz, "no true repentance but that which begins in the love of God and of righteousness. In order to be filled with the love of that which is good, you must first be filled with the love of God. If you wish to be really converted, do not follow these mortifications and penances. Love him who first loved you." Touched by these words, he consulted the Scriptures, looking up all that they say about repentance and conversion. While thus engaged, a new light fell upon the words. "Before," he says, "there was no word in the Scripture more bitter to me than repentance. But now there is not one more sweet and pleasant to me." Yet he had not the joy of forgiveness. One day he cried out in the presence of Staupitz, "Oh! my sin! my sin!" when his venerable friend said to him, "Well would you be only the semblance of a sinner, and have only the semblance of a Saviour? Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those even who are real and great sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation." With these distressing doubts about his spiritual condition came speculative doubts about God and his works, so that, as yet, he found no peace. One day during his second year in the monastery, when he was overwhelmed with despair, an old monk entered his cell and spoke kindly to him. Luther opened his heart to him, and the old man simply repeated to him the statement in the Apostle's Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." He was on a bed of sickness, suffering from a

malady which brought him near to death, and his anxiety about his spiritual condition had been intense. Upon his hearing these words from the monk, a sudden reaction took place, and he exclaimed, "I believe, I believe in the forgiveness of sins." From that moment he believed himself to be converted and accepted of God. One day, shortly after his recovery, he was engaged in a holy solemnity and a gorgeous service, and when he came to chant the words, "O blessed fault, to merit such a Redeemer," it is said that his whole being answered, Amen, and was thrilled with joy. He endeavored to show unto others the path in which he had found this joy. Writing to one of his brethren of the convent of Erfurt, George Spenlein, he says, "I would like much to know how it is with your soul. Is it not weary of its own righteousness? . . . does it not breathe and confide in the righteousness of Christ? . . . O my dear brother, learn to know Christ and Christ crucified. Learn to sing unto him a new song; to despair of thyself, and say, 'Thou, O Lord Jesus! thou art my righteousness, and I am thy son. Thou hast taken what was mine, and given me what was thine. What thou wert not, thou hast become; in order that, what I was not, I might become.' Meditate carefully on this love of Christ, and thou wilt derive ineffable blessing from it. If our labors and our afflictions could give us peace of conscience, why should Christ have died? Thou wilt find peace in him, by despairing of thy works, and learning with what love he opens his arms to thee; takes upon him all thy sins, and gives thee all his righteousness."

John Bunyan (1628–1688). In the account of his

life written by himself, Bunyan says: "It was my delight to be taken captive by the devil at his will, being filled with all unrighteousness; the which did also so strongly work, and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals, (especially considering my years, which were tender, being few,) both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God. Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, as I have also with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affrighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with fearful visions. For, often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid.

"Also, I should at these years be greatly afflicted and troubled with thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last among those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. These things, I say, when I was but a child but nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that then in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith: yet I could not let go my sins: yea, I was also then so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I would often wish, either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing they were only tormentors;

that if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor than be tormented myself.

"Awhile after, those terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did soon cut off the remembrance of them as if they had never been; wherefore, with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins of my lust, and delighted in all transgressions against the law of God; so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ring-leader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness. . . . Presently after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly: this woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, (not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both,) yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven;* and *The Practice of Piety;* which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I would sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me (but all this while I met with no conviction.) Wherefore these books, with the relation, though they did not reach my heart, to awaken my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to reform my vicious life, and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there would very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life. . . . But one day (amongst all the sermons our parson made) his subject was to treat of the Sabbath-day, and the evil of breaking that,

either with labor, sports, or otherwise: (now I was, notwithstanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially that was the way I did solace myself therewith:) wherefore I fell in my conscience under this sermon, thinking and believing that he made that sermon on purpose to show me my evil doing. And at that time, I felt what guile was, though never before that I can remember; but then I was, for the present, greatly loaded therewith, and so went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my spirit. This, for that instant, did benumb the sinews of my delight and did embitter my former pleasures to me: but behold it lasted not: for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to its old course: but oh! how glad I was that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might sin again without control. Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon out of my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming I returned with great delight. But, the same day, as I was in the midst of a game of cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul which said, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore, leaving my hat on the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other ungodly practices. I

had no sooner thus conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my face,) that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing on this also; and while I was thinking of it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind to go on in sin; for, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them; I can but be damned; and if it must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins as be damned for few. Thus I stood in the midst of my play before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing: but I say, having made this conclusion, I returned desperately to my sport again, and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so possess my soul, that I was persuaded I could never attain to other comforts than what I should get in sin; for heaven was gone already, so that, on that I must not think; wherefore I found within me great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it; and I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicacies, lest I should die before I had my desires; for that I feared greatly. . . . Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be satisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a month or more; but one day, as I was standing at a neighbor's shop-window,

and there cursing and swearing and playing the madman, after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house and heard me; who, though she was a very loose and ungodly wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, that I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that she ever heard in all her life; and that I, by thus doing, was able to spoil all the youth in the whole town, if they came but in my company. At this reproof I was silent, and put to secret shame; and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven. . . . But how it came to pass, I know not, I did, from this time forward, so leave my swearing that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it. . . . All this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and plays. But quickly after this I fell in to company with one poor man that made profession of religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matter of religion: wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me to the Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading, but especially with the historical part thereof; for, as for Paul's Epistles, and such-like scriptures, I could not away with them, being as yet ignorant of the corruption of my nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save us. Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven: which commandments I also did strive to keep; and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I would re-

pent and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there got help again: for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England. Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbors did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and indeed so it was, though I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope. . . . I was proud of my godliness, and indeed, I did all that I did either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by men; and thus I continued for about a twelve-month or more. . . . Upon a day, the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work at my calling; and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God; and, being now willing to hear their discourse, I drew nearer to hear what they said for I was now a brisk talker of myself in matters of religion; but I may say I heard but understood not, for they were far above, out of my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God in their hearts, as also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature; they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they were refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the devil. . . . They also discoursed of their own wickedness of heart, and of their unbelief: and did condemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness as filthy, and insufficient to do them any good. And methought they spake as if joy did make them speak, they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture lan-

guage, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world; as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbors. At this, I felt my own heart begin to shake, and mistrust my own condition to be naught; for I saw that, in all my thoughts about religion and salvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind; neither knew I the comfort of the word and promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. . . . Thus therefore when I had heard and considered what they said, I left them, and went about my employment again, but their talk and discourse went with me; also my heart would tarry with them for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced that I wanted the true token of a truly goldly man, and also because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed condition of him that was such a one. Therefore I would often make it my business to be going again and again into the company of these poor people; for I could not stay away; and the more I went among them, the more I did question my condition: and as I still remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel (especially considering what a blind, ignorant, sordid, and ungodly wretch, but just before I was). The one was a very great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under conviction of what by Scripture they asserted: and the other was a great bending of my mind, to a continual meditating on it, and all other good things which at any time I heard or read of. . . . And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new

eyes, and read as I never did before, and especially the Epistles of the apostle St. Paul were sweet and pleasant to me, and indeed then I was never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying to God, that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory. . . . Now also I would pray wherever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or field, and would also often, with lifting up of heart, sing that fifty-first Psalm, 'O Lord, consider my distress:' for as yet I knew not where I was. Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction here, I began to find my soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness; especially with such as these . . . whether I was elected or not? But how, if the day of grace should be past and gone? . . . Thus I continued about a year. . . . About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition; which when they had heard they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself took occasion to talk with me; and was willing to be persuaded of me, though I think, from little ground. . . . Further, in these days, I would find my heart to shut itself up against the Lord and his Holy Word: I have found my unbelief to set, as it were, the shoulder to the door to keep him out; and that too even when I have with many a bitter sigh, cried, Good Lord, break it open; Lord break these gates of brass, and cut these bars of iron asunder. . . . In this condition I went a great while: but when the comforting time was come, I heard one preach a sermon on these words in the Song, 'Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair.' But

at that time he made these two words, 'My love,' his subject-matter: from which, after he had a little opened the text, he observed these several conclusions: 1. That the church, and so every saved soul, is Christ's love, when love-less. Christ's love without cause. 2. Christ's love, which hath been hated of the world. 3. Christ's love, when under temptation and under destruction. 4. Christ's love, from first to last. But I got nothing from what he said at present; only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said: 'If it be so that the saved soul is Christ's love, when under temptation and destruction, then poor tempted soul, when thou art assaulted, and afflicted with temptations, and the hidings of face, then think of these two words, "My love," still.' So, as I was coming home, these words came again into my thoughts; and I well remember, as they came in, I said thus to my heart, What shall I get by thinking on these two words? This thought had no sooner passed through my heart but these words began thus to kindle in my spirit, 'Thou art my love, thou art my love,' twenty times together: and still as they ran in my mind they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up: but being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, But is it true? but is it true? At which that sentence fell upon me, 'He wist not that it was true which was done unto him of the angel.' Then I began to give place to the word which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul: 'Thou art my love, thou art my love,' and nothing shall separate thee from my love. And with that my heart was filled full of comfort and hope;

and now I could believe that my sins would be forgiven me; yea I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home: I thought I could have spoken of his love, and told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me; wherefore I said in my soul with much gladness, Well, would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further; for surely I shall not forget this in forty years hence."

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). See p. 85.

David Brainerd (1718–1747). In the account Brainerd has given of himself, he says: "I was from my youth somewhat sober, and inclined rather to melancholy than the contrary extreme; but do not remember anything of conviction of sin, worthy of remark, till I was, I believe, seven or eight years of age. Then I became concerned for my soul, and terrified at the thoughts of death, and was driven to the performance of duties: but it appeared a melancholy business, and destroyed my eagerness for play. And though, alas! this religious concern was but short-lived, I sometimes attended secret prayer; and thus lived at 'ease in Zion, without God in the world,' and without much concern, as I remember, till I was above thirteen years of age. But some time in the year 1732, I was roused out of carnal security, by I scarce know what means at first; but was much excited by the prevailing of a mortal sickness in Haddam. I was frequent, constant, and

somewhat fervent, in duties; and took delight in reading, especially Mr. Janeway's *Token for Children*. I felt sometimes much melted in duties, and took great delight in the performance of them; and I sometimes hoped that I was converted, or at least in a good and hopeful way for heaven and happiness, not knowing what conversion was. The Spirit of God at this time proceeded far with me; I was remarkably dead to the world, and my thoughts were almost wholly employed about my soul's concerns; and I may indeed say, 'Almost I was persuaded to be a Christian.' I was also exceedingly distressed and melancholy at the death of my mother, in March, 1732. But afterward my religious concern began to decline, and by degrees I fell back into a considerable degree of security, though I still attended secret prayer.

"About the 15th of April, 1733, I removed from my father's house to East Haddam, where I spent four years; but still 'without God in the world,' though, for the most part, I went a round of secret duty. I was not much addicted to young company, or frolicking, as it was called, but this I know, that when I did go into such company, I never returned with so good a conscience as when I went; it always added new guilt, made me afraid to come to the throne of grace, and spoiled those good frames I was wont sometimes to please myself with. But, alas! all my good frames were but self-righteousness, not founded on a desire for the glory of God.

"About the latter end of April, 1737, being full nineteen years of age, I removed to Durham, to work on my farm, and so continued about one year; frequently longing, from a natural inclination, after

a liberal education. When about twenty years of age, I applied myself to study; and was now engaged more than ever in the duties of religion. I became very strict and watchful over my thoughts, words, and actions; and I must be sober indeed, because I designed to devote myself to the ministry; and *imagined* I *did* dedicate myself to the Lord. Some time in April, 1738, I went to Mr. Fiske's (pastor of the church in Haddam) and lived with him during his life. I remember he advised me wholly to abandon young company, and associate myself with grave elderly people: which counsel I followed. My manner of life was exceeding regular, and full of religion, such as it was; for I read the Bible more than twice through in less than a year, spent much time every day in prayer and other secret duties, gave great attention to the word preached, and endeavored to my utmost to retain it. So much concerned was I about religion, that I agreed with some young persons to meet privately on Sabbath evenings for religious exercises, and thought myself sincere in these duties; and after our meeting was ended, I used to repeat discourses of the day to myself; recollecting what I could, though sometimes very late at night. I used sometimes on Monday mornings to recollect the same sermons; I had considerable movings of pleasurable affection in duties, and had many thoughts of joining the church. In short, I had a very good *outside*, and rested entirely on my duties, though not sensible of it. After Mr. Fiske's death, I proceeded with my learning with my brother; was still very constant in religious duties, and often wondered at the levity of professors; it was a trouble to me that they were so

careless in religious matters. Thus I proceeded a considerable length on a self-righteous foundation; and should have been entirely lost and undone, had not the mercy of God prevailed. Some time in the beginning of winter, 1738, it pleased God one Sabbath-day morning, as I was walking out for some secret duties, to give me on a sudden such a sense of my danger, and the wrath of God, that I stood amazed, and my former frames, that I had pleased myself with, all presently vanished. From the view I had of my sin and vileness, I was much distressed all that day, fearing the vengeance of God would overtake me. I was much dejected, kept much alone, and sometimes envied the birds and beasts their happiness, because they were not exposed to eternal misery, as I evidently saw I was. And thus I lived from day to day, being frequently in great distress: sometimes there appeared mountains before me to obstruct my hopes of mercy; and the work of conversion appeared so great, that I thought I should never be the subject of it. I used, however, to pray and cry to God, and perform other duties with great earnestness; and thus hoped by some means to make the case better. And, though hundreds of times I renounced all pretences of any *worth* in my duties, as I thought, even while performing them, and often confessed to God that I deserved nothing, for the very best of them, but eternal condemnation; yet still I had a secret hope of *recommending* myself to God by my religious duties. When I prayed affectionately, and my heart seemed in some measure to melt, I hoped God would be thereby moved to pity me, my prayers then looked with some appearance of *goodness* in them, and I

seemed to *mourn* for sin. And then I could in some measure venture on the mercy of God in Christ, as I thought, though the preponderating thought, the *foundation* of my hope, was some imagination of *goodness* in my heart-melting, flowing of affections in duty, extraordinary enlargements, etc. Though, at times the gate appeared so very straight that it looked next to impossible to enter, yet, at other times I flattered myself that it was not so very difficult, and hoped that I should by diligence and watchfulness soon gain the point. Sometimes, after enlargement in duty and considerable affection I hoped I had made a *good step* towards heaven; imagined that God was affected as I was, and that he would hear such *sincere cries*, as I called them. And so sometimes, when I withdrew for secret duties in great distress, I returned comfortable; and thus healed myself with my *duties*. Some time in February, 1739, I set apart a day for secret fasting and prayer, and spent the day in almost incessant cries to God for mercy, that he would open my eyes to see the evil of sin, and the way of life by Jesus Christ. And God was pleased that day to make considerable discoveries of my heart to me. But still I *trusted* in all the duties I performed; though there was no manner of *goodness* in them, there being in them no respect to the glory of God, nor any such principle in my heart. Yet God was pleased to make my endeavors that day a means to show me my *helplessness* in some measure. Sometimes I was greatly *encouraged*, and imagined that God loved me, and was pleased with me; and thought I should soon be fully reconciled to God. But the whole was founded on mere *presumption*, arising from

enlargement in duty, or flowing affections, or some good resolutions, and the like. And when, at times, great distress began to arise, on a sight of my vileness, nakedness, and inability to deliver myself from a sovereign God, I used to put off all the discovery, as what I could not bear. Once, I remember, a terrible pang of distress seized me, and the thoughts of renouncing myself, and standing naked before God, stripped of all goodness, were so dreadful to me, that I was ready to say to them as Felix to Paul, 'Go thy way for this time.' Thus, though I daily longed for greater conviction of sin, supposing that I must see more of my dreadful state in order to a remedy; yet when the discoveries of my vile, hellish heart were made to me, the sight was so dreadful, and showed me so plainly my exposedness to damnation that I could not endure it. I constantly strove after whatever *qualifications* I imagined others obtained before the reception of Christ, in order to *recommend* me to his favor. Sometimes I felt the power of a *hard heart*, and supposed it must be *softened* before Christ would accept of me; and when I felt any meltings of heart, I hoped now the work was almost done. Hence, when my distress still remained, I was wont to murmur at God's dealings with me; and thought, when others felt their hearts softened, God showed them mercy; but my distress remained still. Sometimes I grew remiss and sluggish, without any great conviction of sin, for a considerable time together; but after such a season, convictions seized me more violently. One night, I remember in particular, when I was walking solitarily abroad, I had opened to me such a view of my sin, that I feared the ground would

cleave asunder under my feet and become my grave; and would send my soul quick into hell, before I could get home. And though I was forced to go to bed, lest my distress should be discovered by others, which I much feared; yet I scarcely durst sleep at all, for I thought it would be a great wonder if I should be out of hell in the morning. . . .

"The many disappointments, great distresses, and perplexity, met with, put me into a most horrible frame of contesting with the Almighty; with an inward vehemence and virulence finding fault with his ways of dealing with mankind. I found great fault with the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; and my wicked heart often wished for some other way of salvation than by Jesus Christ. Being like the troubled sea, my thoughts confused, I used to try to escape the wrath of God by some other means. I had strange projects, full of atheism, contriving to disappoint God's designs and decrees concerning me, or to escape his notice, and hide myself from him. But when, upon reflection, I saw these projects were vain, and would not serve me, and that I could contrive nothing for my own relief; this would throw my mind into the most horrid frame, to wish there was no God, or to wish there were some other God that could control him, etc. These thoughts and desires were the secret inclinations of my heart, frequently acting before I was aware; but alas! they were *mine*, although I was affrighted when I came to reflect on them. When I considered, it distressed me to think that my heart was so full of enmity against God; and it made me tremble, lest his vengeance should suddenly fall upon me. I used before to imagine, that

my heart was not so bad as the Scriptures and some other books represented it. Sometimes I used to take much pains to work it up into a good frame, an humble submissive disposition; and hoped there was then some goodness in me. . . . Thus scores of times, I vainly imagined myself humbled and prepared for saving mercy. And while I was in this distressed, bewildered, and tumultuous state of mind, the corruption of my heart was especially irritated with the following things. 1. The strictness of the divine law. For I found it was impossible for me, after my utmost pains, to answer its demands. . . . 2. Another thing was that faith alone was the condition of salvation; that God would not come down to lower terms, and that he would not promise life and salvation upon my sincere and hearty prayers and endeavors. . . . 3. Another thing was, that I could not find out what faith was; or what it was to believe, and come to Christ. . . . 4. Another thing to which I found a great inward opposition, was the sovereignty of God. I could not bear that it should be wholly at God's pleasure to save or damn me, just as he would. . . . All this time the Spirit of God was powerfully at work with me; and I was inwardly pressed to relinquish all self-confidence, all hopes of ever helping myself by any means whatever. . . . One morning, while I was walking in a solitary place, as usual, I at once saw that all my contrivances and projects to effect or procure deliverance and salvation for myself were utterly *vain;* I was brought quite to a stand, as finding myself totally *lost.* I had thought many times before, that the difficulties in my way were very great; but now I saw, in another and very different

light, that it was for ever impossible for me to do any thing towards helping or delivering myself. . . . The tumult that had been before in my mind was now quieted; and I was something eased of that distress, which I felt, while struggling against a sight of myself, and of the divine sovereignty. I had the greatest certainty that my state was for ever miserable, for all that I could do; and wondered that I had never been sensible of it before. While I remained in this state, my *notions* respecting my *duties* were quite different from what I had ever entertained in times past. Before this, the more I did in duty, the more hard I thought it would be for God to cast me off; though at the same time I confessed, and thought I saw, that there was no goodness or *merit* in my duties; but now the more I did in prayer or any other duty, the more I saw I was indebted to God for *allowing* me to ask for mercy; for I saw it was self-interest had led me to pray, and that I had never once prayed from any respect to the glory of God. . . .

"I continued, as I remember, in this state of mind, from Friday morning till the Sabbath evening following (July 12, 1739), when I was walking again in the same solitary place, where I was brought to see myself lost and helpless, as before mentioned. Here, in a mournful melancholy state, I was attempting to pray; but found no heart to engage in that or any other duty; my former concern, exercise, and religious affections were now gone. I thought the Spirit of God had *quite* left me; but still was not distressed: yet disconsolate, as if there was nothing in heaven or earth could make me happy. Having been thus endeavoring to pray—though, as I thought, very

stupid and senseless—for near half an hour, then, as I was walking in a dark, thick grove, *unspeakable glory* seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul. I do not mean any external brightness for I saw no such thing; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, somewhere in the third heavens, or anything of that nature; but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of *God*, such as I never had before, nor any thing which had the least resemblance of it. I stood still, wondered, and admired! I knew that I had never seen before anything comparable to it for excellency and beauty; it was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had of God, or things divine. I had no particular apprehension of any one person in the Trinity, either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost; but it appeared to be *divine glory*. *My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable*, to see such a God, such a glorious Divine Being; and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied that he should be God *over all* for ever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God, that I was even swallowed up in him; at least to that degree, that I had no thought (as I remember) at first about my own salvation, and scarce reflected there was such a creature as myself.

"Thus God, I trust, brought me to a hearty disposition to *exalt him*, and set him on the throne, and principally and ultimately to aim at his honor and glory, as King of the universe. I continued in this state of inward joy, peace, and astonishment, till near dark, without any sensible abatement; and then began to think and examine what I had seen; and felt sweetly

composed in my mind all the evening following. I felt myself in a new world, and everything about me appeared in a new aspect from what it was wont to do. At this time the way of salvation opened to me with such infinite wisdom, suitableness, and excellency, that I wondered I should ever think of any other way of salvation; was amazed that I had not dropped my own contrivances, and complied with this lovely, blessed, and excellent way before. If I could have been saved by my own duties, or any other way that I had formerly contrived, my whole soul would now have refused it. I wondered that all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation, entirely by the righteousness of Christ."[1]

Asahel Nettleton (1783–1844). "I imagined all was well with me till I was about eighteen years old, when I heard a sermon preached on the subject of regeneration, which put me upon thinking of the need of a change of heart in myself. . . . Christian conversation gave me the most painful sensations. I tried to repent, but I could not feel the least sorrow for my innumerable sins. By endeavoring to repent; I saw my heart still remained impenitent. Although I knew I hated everything serious, yet I determined to habituate myself to the duties which God required, and see if I could not, by this means, be made to love him; and I continued in this state some months. The fear of having committed the unpardonable sin now began to rise in my mind; and I could find no

[1] "Life and Diary of David Brainerd," by Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, vol. ii., pp. 316–319.

rest, day nor night. When my weary limbs slept, the fear of waking in a miserable eternity prevented the closing of my eyes; and nothing gave me ease. No voice of mirth or sound whatever was heard, but what reminded me of the awful day, when God shall bring every work into judgment. All self-righteousness failed me; and having no confidence in God, I was left in deep despondency. After a while, a surprising tremor seized my limbs and death seemed to have taken hold upon me. Eternity, the word eternity sounded louder than any voice I ever heard: and every moment of time seemed more valuable than all the wealth of the world. Not long after this, an unusual calmness pervaded my soul, which I thought little of at first, except that I was freed from my awful convictions; and this sometimes grieved me, fearing that I had lost all conviction. Soon after, hearing the feelings of a Christian described, I took courage, and thought I knew, by experience, what they were. The character of God and the doctrines of the Bible, which I could not meditate upon without hatred, especially those of election and free grace, now appeared delightful; and the only means by which, through grace, dead sinners can be the living sons of God. My heart feels its sinfulness. To confess my sins to God gives me peace which before I knew nothing of. To confess sorrow for it affords a joy which my tongue cannot express."[1]

Rev. Charles G. Finney, D.D. (1792–1840). In his Memoirs, written by himself, Mr. Finney says: "When

[1] *Memoir of the Life and Character of Rev. Asahel Nettleton, D.D.*, by Bennet Tyler, D.D. pp. 16–18.

I went to Adams to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. . . . At Adams, for the first time, I sat statedly, for any length of time, under an educated ministry, that of Rev. George W. Gale, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Adams, N. Y. But as I read my Bible and attended prayer meeting, heard Mr. Gale preach, and conversed with him, with the elders of the church, and with others, from time to time, I became very restless. A little consideration convinced me that I was by no means in a state of mind to go to heaven, if I should die. It seemed to me, that there must be something in religion that was of infinite importance; and it was soon settled with me, that if the soul was immortal I needed a great change in my inward state to be prepared for happiness in heaven. On Sabbath evening, in the autumn of 1821, I made up my mind that I would settle the question of my soul's salvation at once; that, if it were possible, I would make my peace with God." Some days later, going to his office, he was assailed with such questions as these, What are you waiting for? Did you not promise to give your heart to God? Are you endeavoring to work out a righteousness of your own?—He says: "I took down my bass viol and, as I was accustomed to do, began to play and sing some pieces of sacred music. But, as soon as I began to sing those sacred words, I began to weep. . . . After trying in vain to suppress my tears, I put up my instrument." He retired to the woods for reflection and prayer; and to conceal himself from possible passers-by, he crept into a space between two large trees that had fallen to the ground. He says: "In attempting to pray, I would hear a rustling in the

leaves, as I thought, and would stop and look up to see if any one were coming. This I did several times. Finally I found myself verging fast to despair. . . . I began to feel deeply that it was too late; that it must be that I was given up of God, and was past hope. . . . I again thought I heard some one approach me, and I opened my eyes to see whether it were so. But right there, the revelation of my pride of heart, as the great difficulty that stood in my way, was distinctly shown to me. An overwhelming sense of my wickedness in being ashamed to have a human being see me on my knees before God, took such powerful possession of me, that I cried at the top of my voice, and exclaimed that I would not leave that place if all the men on the earth and all the devils in hell surrounded me. . . . The sin appeared awful and infinite. It broke me down before the Lord: I had intellectually believed the Bible before, but never had the truth been in my mind, that faith was a voluntary trust, instead of an intellectual state. I was as conscious, as I was of my own existence, of trusting, at that moment, in God's veracity. 'God's promises' did not seem to fall so much into my intellect, as into my heart. I found that my mind had become most wonderfully quiet and peaceful. I said to myself, What is this? I must have grieved the Holy Ghost entirely away. I have lost all my conviction. . . . Why! thought I, I was never so far from being concerned about my salvation in my life. But, take any view of it I would, I could not be anxious at all about my soul and about my spiritual state. The repose of my mind was unspeakably great. I never can describe it in words." His preceptor in the law having removed

to another office, he says: "By evening we got the books and furniture adjusted, and I made, in the open fireplace, a good fire, hoping to spend the evening alone. Just at dark, Squire W., seeing that everything was adjusted, bade me good night, and went to his home. I had accompanied him to the door and, as I closed the door and turned around, my heart seemed to be liquid within me. All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, I want to pour my whole soul out to God. The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the room: nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ, face to face. It did not occur to me then, nor did it for some time afterwards, that it was wholly a mental state. On the contrary, it seemed to me as if I saw him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. . . . I wept aloud, like a little child, and made such confession as I could with my choked utterances. . . . As I turned, and was about to take a seat by the fire, (in the front room of the office,) I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it; . . . without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person. . . . the Holy Ghost descended upon me, in a manner that seemed to go through my body and soul. I could feel the impression like a wave of electricity, going through and through me; indeed, it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love, . . . I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me with immense wings."

During the night, he says, he awoke many times, "on account of the great flow of the love of God that was in my heart. I was so filled with love I could not sleep."

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887). "I remember having religious impressions, distinct and definite, as early as when I was eight or nine years old. I remember that, when my brother George, who was next older than I and who was beginning to be my helpful companion, became a Christian, being awakened and converted in college, it seemed as though a gulf had come between us; and as though he was a saint on one side of it, while I was a little reprobate on the other side. If there had been a total eclipse of the sun, I should not have been in more profound darkness outwardly than I was inwardly."

On one occasion, the funeral of a companion, he says: "I went into an ecstasy of anguish. At intervals of days and weeks, I cried and prayed. There was scarcely a retired place in the garden, in the woodhouse, in the carriage-house, or in the barn, that was not a scene of my crying and praying.

"When I was fourteen years of age I left Boston and went to Mt. Pleasant. There broke out, while I was there, one of those infectious religious revivals, which have no basis of judicious instruction, but spring from inexperienced zeal. It resulted in many mushroom hopes; and I had one of them: but I do not know how, or why, I was converted. I only know that I was in a sort of day-dream, in which I hoped I had given myself to Christ.

"When I went to college, (Amherst,) there was a

revival there. I was then about seventeen years old, and I began to pass from boyhood to manhood, but I was yet in an unsettled state of mind, I had no firm religious ground to stand on. . . . I went through another phase of suffering, which was far worse than any I had previously experienced. It seemed as though all the darknesses of my childhood were mere puffs to the blackness I was now passing through. My feeling was such that, if dragging myself on my belly through the street had promised any chance of resulting in good, I would have done it. No man was so mean that I was not willing to ask him to pray for me. There was no humiliation I would not have submitted to ten thousand times over if, thereby, I could have found relief from the doubt, perplexity, and fear, which tormented me.

"I went to Dr. Humphrey, in my darkness of soul, and said, I am without hope, and am utterly wretched, and I want to be a Christian.

"He sat, and looked with great compassion upon me, (for he was one of the best men on earth. If there is a saint in heaven Dr. Humphrey is one,) and he said, 'Ah, it is the Spirit of God, my young man; and when the Spirit of God is at work in a soul, I dare not interfere'; and I went away in blacker darkness than when I came, if possible. I went to an inquiry meeting, which Professor Hitchcock was conducting; and when he saw me there, he said, 'My friends, I am so overwhelmed with the consciousness of God's presence in this room, that I cannot speak a word'; and he stopped talking; and I got up and went out, without obtaining rescue or help. Then I resorted to prayer, and frequently prayed all night; or should

have done so, if I had not gone to sleep. I tried a great many devices; I strove with terrific earnestness and tremendous strength; and I remember, that one night, when I knelt before the fire, where I had been studying and praying, there came the thought to my mind,—Will God permit the devil to have charge of one of his children that does not want to be deceived, —and, that instant, there rose up in me such a sense of God's taking care of those who put their trust in him, that, for an hour, all the world was crystalline; the heavens were lucid; and I sprang to my feet, and began to cry and laugh; and, feeling that I must tell somebody what the Lord had done for me, I went and told Dr. Humphrey and others.

"I shall never forget the feelings, with which I walked forth that May morning. . . . The singing of the birds in the woods,—for I roamed in the woods,— was cacophonious to the sweet music of my thoughts; and there were no forms in the universe, which seemed to me graceful enough to represent the being, the conception of whose character had just dawned upon my mind."[1]

S. H. Hadley, Superintendent of the old Jerry McAuley Mission in Water Street, New York.

"I gave up my studies, took a travelling position, became a professional gambler, and for fifteen years rarely went to bed sober." As a consequence of his dissipation he lost his position and became an

[1] *A Biography of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher,* by William and Samuel Scoville, pp. 98–99.

outcast. "One Tuesday evening, on the 18th of April, 1882, I sat in a saloon in Harlem, a homeless, friendless, dying drunkard: I had pawned or sold everything that would bring a drink: . . . I had not eaten for days; and, for four nights preceding, I had suffered with delirium tremens. As I sat there thinking I seemed to feel some great and mighty presence; I did not know then what it was. I learned afterwards that it was Jesus, the sinner's friend. I walked up to the bar and pounded it with my fists till I made the glasses rattle. I said I would never take another drink, if I died in the street. . . . Something said, If you want to keep that promise, go and have yourself locked up. I went to the nearest station-house and had myself locked up."

He tells us that in his cell he prayed; in the morning went home to his brother; and in the evening attended a meeting at the Jerry McAuley Mission, and made up his mind that he "would be saved or die right there." When the invitation was given he knelt at the foot of the platform. "How I wondered if I would be saved; if God would help me. I was a total stranger, but I felt that I had sympathy, and it helped me. Jerry made the first prayer; I shall never forget it. He said: 'Dear Saviour, won't you look down in pity on these poor souls; they need your help, Lord; they can't get along without it. Blessed Jesus, these poor sinners have got themselves into a bad hole. Won't you help them out? Speak to them, Lord, do, for Jesus' sake. Amen.' " Then they were asked to pray for themselves. "How I trembled as he approached me. Though I had knelt down with the determination to give my heart to God, when it came

to the very moment of the grand decision, I felt like backing out. The devil knelt by my side, and whispered in my ears crimes I had forgotten for months. What are you going to do about such matters, if you start to be a Christian to-night? Now you can't afford to make a mistake; had you not better think this matter over and try to fix up some of the troubles you are in, and then start? O what a conflict was going on in my soul! A blessed whisper said, Come. The devil said, Be careful. Jerry's hand was on my head. He said, Brother, pray. I said, Can't you pray for me? Jerry said, All the prayers in the world won't save you unless you pray for yourself. I halted but a moment, and then, with a breaking heart, I said, Dear Jesus, can you help me? Dear reader, never with mortal tongue, can I describe that moment. Although, up to that moment, my soul had been filled with indescribable gloom, I felt the glorious brightness of the noon-day sun shine into my heart; I felt I was a free man. O the precious feeling of safety, of freedom, of resting on Jesus! . . . From that moment until now I have never wanted a drink of whiskey."[1]

[1] James H. Leuba, *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. vii., pp. 331–332, 384–385.

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